UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MEN AND INTIMACY:

ESSAYING THE POLITICS OF ABSENCE

BY

DUANE H. MASSING ©

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

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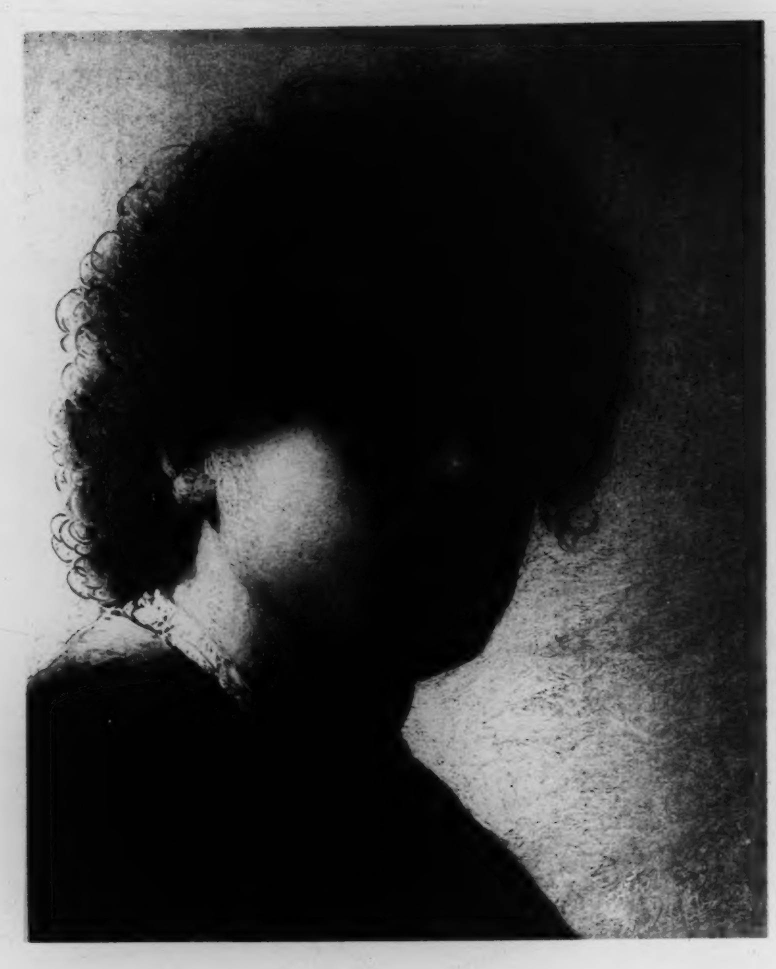

Self portrait

Ca. 1628

Rembrand Harmensjoon van Rijn

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Men and Intimacy: Essaying the Politics of Absence* submitted by Duane Hermod Massing in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

To my father, Edwin “Charlie” Massing.
June 6, 1918 - March 18, 1997.
He did what he thought was best and took pride in his work.

To my son, Nevin David Massing.
August 21, 1972.
He is busy pushing the boundaries outward.

When you light the lamp you will see him. He sits there, behind the door... the eyebrows so heavy, the forehead so light, lonely in his whole body, waiting for you.
(Robert Bly, *Finding the Father*)

ABSTRACT

I begin this study by raising troublesome personal questions from the positionality of a Caucasian, middle-aged heterosexual social work educator struggling to understand his place as a man; moving then to raise a multitude of questions by and about the politics, problematics and possibilities for contemporary man-in-relation.

In considering the possibilities for an "intimate" and embodied exploration of those questions that could challenge more canonical ways of understanding the world, I settle on the essay as both form and methodology. My new/old essay centers on notions of a reflective, changing self in conversation with the *conditio humane*, drawing upon Michel de Montaigne's essay genre and notions of self inaugurated by him and by fellow Renaissance men René Descartes and Rembrandt Harmensjoon van Rijn.

I draw selectively from historical and contemporary ideologies to show how they inform man's shifting constructions of manhood and womanhood. Feminist thinkers offer the strongest challenge to such "gender gymnastics." I essay intimacy as a gendered construction of modernity, tracing its path through history to the binary and technological crisis of our time. The absence is about man's struggles to find a secure sense of identity and intimacy in the face of modern constructions of the sovereign (male) self, woman, and power; his exscription of woman and the feminine; his homophobia; and his denial of ontological lack, the "echoless silence of the universe." The men I converse with are remarkable frank about such matters.

The essay aspires to come to a reflexive, critical, and even metatheoretical position in order to shed light on narratives of separation and connection on behalf of men and their Others. I essay my own struggles with issues such as essentialism, power, the paternal Law of psychoanalysis, and

Descartes' *cogito,* then argue that they also reflect paradigmatic dilemmas for Western man(hoods). I challenge educators to reconceive curriculum and instruction, particularly so in work with men and women who aspire to be teachers or social workers (not to mention the chlidren and adults they will work with in their professional roles). I conclude the essay on a note of cautious optimism tempered with concern for the gender-intimacy project and the shifting and uncertain times we are living in. Resistance to ideologies of dominant manhood is possible though riskful.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION 1
  Beginning in the Middle 1
  Essaying Man in Relation 3
  Prefacing the Essay 5
  Essaying the Self 7
  Essaying Life's Structures 9
  Essay as Genre 10
  Coming to the Research Question 12
  Coming to Terms 14
  Synopsis 19

Chapter Two: WHY MEN? 20
  Introduction 20
  Personal Narratives 21
  The Gender War 23
  Man to Man 24
  Learning the Manhood Thing 26
  Man and his Tools 28
  Men and Knowing 29
  Silence at the Heart 30
  Men Who Would be Helpful 32
  Synopsis 34

Chapter Three: WHY INTIMACY? 35
  Introduction 35
  Intimacy as Achille's Heel 36
  Getting Close and Personal 38
  Intimacy Unspoken 43
  Intimacy Absent 45
  Synopsis 46

Chapter Four: WHY ESSAY? 49
  Introduction: A Reluctant Methodology 49
  An Intimate Methodology 52
  Toward Defining Essay 53
  What a Personal Essay Looks Like 54
  Unmethodically Methodical/Methodically Unmethodical 58
  Who is the Father 59
  Authoring/Authorizing the Essay 62
  Text as Constitutive 65
  Embodying/Writing Man 66
  Narrative Spirals 68

Spirals of Interpretation ... 70
Inscribings of Power/Power of Inscribings ... 74
The Community of Truth ... 76
Whither, Then, the Essay ... 79

Chapter Five: INVENTING MANHOOD ... 81
- Introduction ... 81
- Adam Remained Silent ... 82
- Greek Love ... 84
- Medieval Man ... 86
- Writing Renaissance Man ... 90
  - Of friendship ... 90
  - Cogito, ergo sum ... 94
  - Painting the self ... 96
- Nineteenth-Century Manhoods ... 98
  - Manliness and morality ... 98
  - Overcivilized manhood ... 101
  - Rediscovering boyhood ... 102
  - Policing the borders ... 103
  - Fit to be a man ... 107
- Twentieth-Century Man ... 108
  - Stephe's character factory ... 108
  - Manhood at mid-century ... 111
  - The allure of androgyny ... 114
- Gender and Genius ... 119
- Constructing/Deconstructing the Senses ... 122
  - The opening of vision ... 122
  - Deodorizing man ... 125
- Synopsis ... 128

Chapter Six: REINSTATING ESSENTIAL MANHOOD ... 129
- Introduction ... 129
- Warren Farrell: Feminist to Masculinist ... 129
  - The liberated man ... 129
  - Making it better ... 132
  - Why men are the way they are ... 133
  - The myth of male power ... 137
  - Another workshop ... 144
- Robert Bly's Mythopoesis ... 145
- Rewriting Freud ... 151
- Reconstituting Cartesian Man ... 152
- Synopsis ... 158

Chapter Seven: RE-PRESENTING POSTMODERN MAN ... 160
- Revisiting Representation ... 160
- Male Subjectivity at the Margins ... 163
- Transvaluing Phallic Masculinity ... 168
- Running Scared ... 171
- What's Your Brand ... 175
- A Real Man's Music ... 176

Synopsis 178

Chapter Eight: DISCOURSES OF INTIMACY 179
- Back to Beginnings 178
- The Intentional Self 182
- Intimacy as Dialectic 184
- Public and Private 188
- Epigenesis of Intimacy 193
  - Identity and the life cycle 193
  - Mars and Venus 195
- Intimacy as Love 197
  - Sorge 198
  - Philia 199
  - Agape 200
  - Eros 202
- Giving What we Don't Have 203
- A Chasm in the Text 205

Chapter Nine: REINVENTING INTIMACY IN OUR TIME 208
- Introduction 208
- Revisiting Authenticity and Reflexivity 208
- Engendering Emotion 212
- Rethinking Power and Intimacy 214
- The Saturated Self 216
- Intimate Citizenship 217
- Terrible Intimacies 219
- Discourses of Intimacy 223

Chapter Nine: CONVERSATIONS WITH MEN 229
- Ron 229
  - Essaying the conversation 234
- Ken 238
  - Essaying the conversation 243
- Wilf 247
  - Essaying the conversation 250
- Robert 253
  - Essaying the conversation 258
- Erik 261
  - Essaying the conversation 265
- Peter 267
  - Essaying the conversation 272
- Reflections on Conversational Themes 275

Chapter Eleven: EPIPHANIES 280
- Paying My Debts 280
- Who Won the Binary War, Daddy 282
- Body Matters 284
- Whither Gender 286
- Of Mentors 288
- Hearing Other Voices 290

Honoring the Father 292
Transforming Curriculum 293
Rehabilitation Programs 298
Rowboats, Bicycles and 20oz. Hammers 300
Snail Tracks 302

THESES 304

EPILOGUE 306

REFERENCES 309

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the Middle

It comes to me when I least expect it. It is a cold evening in the late fall a few years ago. Little skiffs of snow foreshadow the challenges to come. As I work, alone, trying to get the heating system working in our new house, I mull over my feelings about my son's announcement of his plan to leave home. I am suddenly struck by the stark juxtaposition of my father's aging on the moment of my son's beginnings. One looks back in what I imagine to be regret; the other clearly looks forward, eyes glistening in anticipation of what life has to offer in this place where he wants to go. I can feel my son's intense excitement, and my father's sadness.... I see *Pelle the Conquerer.* A sad story, but I cannot cry... "*Tak, farvel*" the young Pelle says as he leaves his father to set sail for *Amerika.* For them, it is goodbye forever.

Time stands still for a moment as I stand in the middle, looking both ways from my life to theirs. I am flooded with feelings about this wrenching ending and beginning. Perhaps later I will see new possibilities, but right now it is my overwhelming pain and confusion that are in the forefront. I feel abandoned. I cannot seem to share my experience with either of them, for they are both just beyond my reach. My wife has her own pain, and we do share a lot, but I don't seem to be able to share the *depths* of it with her or anyone. I am at a loss, it seems, for the words to describe what is happening within me.... I know I must be at some kind of important crossroads. *But one thing is very clear above all else, even in that moment of confusion and loneliness: I must now in some momentous and final way "grow up," decide who I am, decide what life is about and what I want it to be about. This challenge can no longer be denied its resolution.*

Though my dilemma may be familiar to many men (whether as fathers or as sons, or as "in-between"), I as central character in my own story often feel alone in my sense-making journey; a mere fragment in a more epic human story. My story is still unfolding--it is for me to thicken the narrative, develop the plot line, decide on an appropriate ending! Among other things, many other things, I must try to put words to what so often seems unspeakable between men, between men and the others in their lives. It is a story of connection discovered, connection possible, connection denied, connection deferred. It is often a painful story.

Books, articles, movies, music, and television programs about men and relationships flood the market as I begin this study. All of a sudden, it seems that this is the hot topic of the day. Robert Bly's (1990) *Iron John* has just been published, and it quickly becomes iconic for many men who are hungry for some guidance in reinventing themselves, in reconciling with the father (whether actual or internalized), and in negotiating conflict between the genders. After centuries of male hegemony, a hegemony that inevitably problematizes women, it is finally acceptable--even fashionable--to say that men have an Achilles Heel, *a problem* in their intimate relationships or those they would like to be more so. Is this one of those trendy issues that will it soon fade from public consciousness--is it even fading as I write? Is it, as some men say, a reflection of a sinister feminist plot to foist yet another agenda onto men; a way to blame men for all the other ills of the world just as "they" have blamed violence on men? If there is a "gender war" as some will say, is it a matter of women's unwillingness to appreciate and accept men for what and who they really are and are destined to be by Mother Nature and perhaps God?

Women hurt, and have long hurt, most often at the hands of men and of the ideologies that inform them. All of a sudden men are discovering *their* pain. We most often hear about that pain in a way that blames women ("me too," and "I hurt worse than you do," and even "it is your fault"), but at least the barriers start to come down and perhaps that is a good thing. If there is something about being a man that is problematic in our time, it is no longer only women who are naming the beast. Maybe men and manhood are really in crisis. If there is a crisis, is it only a crisis of some Marlborough man out there who no longer feels master of the domain he surveys, or is it a crisis for ordinary guys who just want, as Freud says, "to love and to work"? Is it a problem of older generations of traditional men, or is it so as well for those sensitive and often younger men who are committed to changing themselves and the ways they relate to the world? Is it a crisis for "Other" men: gay men and men of color?

This project is about issues of men-in-relation. Father/son and son/father issues are not the only ones that are problematic for me; nor, perhaps, for most men. But for me it is the poignant middle point and Achilles' heel. I have long known that "real men" are not supposed to reveal their vulnerabilities so, but I cannot seem to do otherwise. It will immediately become clear to my reader that I have enormous personal stake in this project about men; a stake that is apt to represent both its greatest strength and its greatest tensionality. I wonder, are my issues related to this thing people call *intimacy*? I am sure I am not the first to wonder about such questions.

Essaying Men-in-Relation

> What we ordinarily call friends and friendships are nothing but acquaintanceships and familiarities formed by some chance or convenience, by means of which our souls are bound to each other. In the friendship I speak of, our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again. If you press me to tell why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed except by answering: *Because it was he, because it was me.* Michael de Montaigne, writing ca. 1580 about his friend Etienne La Boétie, 1958, I:28, p.139])

This evocative excerpt is from Montaigne's famous essay, *Of Friendship*. His remarkable friendship with a man, Etienne La Boétie-- or rather his retrospective account of that friendship, written some time after La Boétie's death-- is an inspiration. Can we even imagine a man writing of male friendship in such a manner today? Would it qualify as intimacy, narcissism, or mere sentimentality on a contemporary reading--has he anything worthwhile to say to contemporary men or women?

Montaigne will, in one way and another, be an important guide for me as I lead my reader through the dense thickets and the sunlit clearings that constitute men's lives. He may seem a strange and anachronistic guide indeed for late twentieth-century man; but I ask my reader to indulge me a little, to wait and see what we might together learn from him and through him and his essay form. His invention of the personal essay genre that inspires my own wanderings in this dissertation is, perhaps, reason enough to commend him even if we were to see the essay as a merely interesting though perhaps somewhat quaint literary genre. But it is so much more than that. His essay is also *method*, albeit "unmethodical method" as Adorno (1974) calls it; an "experiment in the community of truth" (O'Neill, 1982, p. 9). That very unmethodicalness seems congenial indeed as an antidote to whatever ails (instrumental) contemporary man. If something ails men, and if the essay is such an antidote, then perhaps it could serve admirably as an "unmethodically methodical experiment" in truth and a method for this study. If my reader is by now even the least bit captivated by the essay and my promise of substance to come, then perhaps we are already beginning the experiment in building community.

This essay is about men as they experience and construct themselves and their world--it is about what they describe as "real" experience, but implicitly about ideology and some bigger picture.

Beginning with Montaigne's story and my own, I rely heavily though not exclusively on men to "write" their lives. In so doing I do not intend to signal any solidarity with the hegemonic traditions of generic "man" who until very recently claimed to write for all of humanity; writing all of the world in his image of power-over, separation, certainty, and control. For some of my readers, and women in particular, that will not suffice as a justification for the relative invisibility of man's Others in this essay. *Woman*, cast as one with nature, has long represented *absolutely Other* to Man.

If my female reader is already unhappy with the probable invisibility of women in this essay, many Others are apt to take issue as well. Children, gay men, men not of the European tradition, and nature-- in our time, all of man's others are "talking" back and demanding a change. Some will take issue with heterosexism, some with Eurocentrism, some with matters of age. Can I in any fair way present issues and concerns of younger men? Can I in any fair way represent the multitude of male identities and even subversive identities "out there?"

Men may also chide me for generalizing about men-- after all, one of Modernity's cornerstone ideas is that of *individualism and the self*, being free to be who one chooses free of restraint and generalization. One of the dilemmas in gender discourse, and a central tensionality in this essay and in my life, will be how to question the very grounds men walk on without sinking into some political morass that seems to "spoil" and needlessly complicate the goodness that is manhood, humanness, friendship and being alive. A friend chides me for wanting to put his bicycle ride with a male friend to a political analysis: "It's just a bike ride, after all, not a political act. Why do you want to spoil everything with this gender analysis?" It is an important question that will demand an answer.

Can we ever really accept life at face value? Are things ever as they appear, or *only* as they appear? If they are not, does it not serve us well to "peel" layers from them, to analyse and interpret? Does an apolitical analysis, even if it were possible, have any shred of usefulness? Can I take men's part in the issues addressed in this essay without becoming a *partisan*, an unquestioning booster of men and the status quo-- and a part of the male tradition that excludes and oppresses women and others? The change often demanded is that man become more "real," more "honest," more "present" to the others/Others in his life. These words, among others, are signifiers for *intimacy* in our time. They can perhaps serve as interim definitions for it. Perhaps it is already clear that this essay about men and "intimacy" is also about men and power. If it is about power, it is also about risk--my risk and my reader's risk--in challenging "how things are."

My reader could quite fairly ask, even at this early point, whether I am aware of my own deep situatedness in the midst of the very project of Modernity and male hegemony that I seem to claim to question. I am a child of the forties and fifties, a social work educator indoctrinated early in Freudian thought. I, like a growing number of men, want to disown the more ugly and obvious aspects of male hegemony. But I am, after all, a middle-aged heterosexual "white guy" who is privileged to be in the truth-production business, so the question is an eminently fair one. How could I be otherwise, given the world I have grown up and lived in? But in my defence I ask, are we forever trapped within our traditions? Can a rigorously reflexive and critical analysis subvert some of those traditions? Can the tensionalities inherent in these questions serve the project well, or will they bring it to a standstill? We must see what happens.

The issue of my situatedness in the essay deserves a further comment. I do not intend to write in the emerging (and I might say very exciting) genre of the *critical autobiography*, though I do intend to write in a personal and I hope even intimate way. One such autobiography that I much admire is David Jackson's (1990) *Unmasking Masculinity*. Jackson writes as a "new" man whose life changes drastically as a result of a serious heart problem. Jackson shares openly with his reader his struggles to find a new voice that does not hide behind received knowledge, and yet acknowledges the structural and political situatedness.

When written with integrity, the critical autobiography is a profoundly radical genre for men in that it sets out to collapse the hallowed public--private binary.

Much as I admire those who would struggle to write in this way--an enormous risk, particularly for men--I choose not to embrace the genre wholly. Perhaps I lack the courage to expose my life so, perhaps I do not want to dishonor those people in my intimate life who have no voice in this essay, perhaps I am apprehensive about charges of solipsism. In the main, though, I prefer to explore the related but different essay genre to see what it might offer. The genres are very similar; the most important difference perhaps being in the author's covenant with the reader: does one undertake to twist and turn through one's life selectively in the service of the essay project, or to try to present an account of a whole life? In both cases, of course, there are limits to be accounted for.

Prefacing the Essay

The function of a preface is usually seen as preparing the reader for what will follow. But then Montaigne does not seem to prepare us in the ever so brief preface to his *Essaies*-- indeed he says we should not waste our time on him:

> This book was written in good faith, reader. It warns you from the outset that in it I have set myself no goal but a domestic and private one. I have had no thought of serving either you or my glory.... I want to be seen in my simple, natural, ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice; for it is myself that I portray. My defects will here be read to the life, and also my natural form, as far as respect for the public has allowed.... Thus, reader, *I am myself the matter of my book*; you would be unreasonable to spend your leisure on so frivolous and vain a subject. So farewell. Montaigne, this first day of March, fifteen hundred and eighty. (1958, I, *Preface*, p. 2)

Who is this man? He seems to promise autobiography, however humble, but then says we should not read him. Are we to believe him? I think not! If he intends to be taken seriously, what is he up to? I want Montaigne's *Essaies* to be autobiographical, to tell me of his actual perceptions about his daily life, to show his whole, true and authentic self. Despite his prefatory caveats, he will later take pains to say that his essays are not autobiographical, and clearly warns his reader not to assume such-- *but they will continue to read as if they were*. His family and friends laugh, he will say, at the fictional persona that he presents for the world to see. I find this a constant tension in reading him, and my reader may as well. We always want the real story: unvarnished, uncomplicated, complete. We want our authors to be visibly and clearly located in their discourse. We want our bigger truths, too, to be clear and uncomplicated. We do not like to be toyed with.

The believability and the value of the essay rests as much within the reader and the cultural possibilities of their time as much as within the writer's persona and skill. The essay aims to build community, after all. Montaigne makes an argument, obscure and convoluted though it often is; an appeal to and for good sense. He always has an agenda and a serious purpose that eventually transcends any apparent attempt at entertainment, self-indulgence or solipsism, or self-deprecation. Beginning with his *Preface*, Montaigne hopes to engage his reader in the joint project of writing/reading the world. He says we would be "unreasonable" to read him-- but we will miss a rare treat indeed if we take him at his word. Who, after all, could spend a lifetime on such a project and not want to be read? He is playing with us. His masterful prefacing is apt to unsettle us; it is a foretaste of what he will require of us as readers. Essays are apt to unsettle. My essay may do so-- at least I hope it will. I have sufficient vanity as not to suggest that it is unreasonable to read it.

O'Neill (1982), in his rich and sympathetic commentary on Montaigne's work, describes the function of the preface: "A preface, then, brings together the work of the reader and the writer in order to secure *what the text needs from each of them* separately if it is to fulfill its proper discourse.... The preface is the dialectical center of the relation between the reader and the writer" (p. 4). The dialectic proceeds in such a way that the reader's assent is always assured: "The art of the dialectician is to act so that this assent can never be refused" (p. 8). The essay is a growing conversation.

The preface, then, is *not* the beginning or foretaste at all; but rather *the very center of the essay* and the center of the essayist's program for themselves and the reader. I hope that my own preface might serve as the center of a growing relation, an incipient conversation, between myself and my reader as we struggle toward synthesis of the dialectics in this essay about men and "intimacy." I have already begun to raise such dialectics and tensionalities because I cannot proceed without my reader's assent. As I struggle to make sense, first of my own story and then the stories of other men-- with our cultural "stories" sitting vigilantly on our shoulders--I ask my reader to do likewise. I ask a lot, obviously, but that is the essence of what it is to *essaie* (at least in the tradition so masterfully inaugurated by Montaigne).

Essaying the Self

Montaigne signals the dawn of the Renaissance and the dawn of the modern Self in his essays. He is a French nobleman and a public figure, but his real loves are ideas and writing. In fact, he leaves public life just before his fortieth birthday to devote his life to the *Essaies* and to the periodic nursing of his kidney stones. He wants us to see him as he wants to see himself; that is as an ordinary man. Montaigne's restless mind and pen wander around a multitude of issues that constitute his world and daily life. Nothing, it seems, is too trivial for him to write about, and then to endlessly re-write. He develops his ideas most often while riding his horse around his Gascony estate; retiring later to write in the comfort and seclusion of his library in Chateau Montaigne. Though Montaigne's topics are diverse, he says that he puts his whole self-- his body, his feelings, his thoughts-- in the center of them: "The world lookes ever for-right, I turn my sight inward, there

I fix it, there I ammuse it. Every man lookes before himself, I looke within my selfe" (Montaigne, 1958, II(17), p. 657).

I remind my reader again that Montaigne says his essays are not autobiography! Montaigne's *Essaies* are personal--remarkably so for his time-- and reflexive. The reflexivity that characterizes my more contemporary essay in the Montaignean tradition, the constant interplay of the substance of what is said or seems to be said and the very justification for how and why and by whom it may be said, is a tensionality that the reader may find troublesome and even tedious at times. I use the notion of reflexivity in Charles Taylor's (1989) sense of *radical reflexivity*: "focussing on myself as the agent of experience and making this my object" (pp. 130-131). Taylor shows that it is a distinguishing feature of the Modern identity, but even the Renaissance Montaigne is able to raise it to high art. It is this often troublesome reflexivity that is the real genius of the essay form. I will explore this important notion in Chapter One since it is the foundation of the very self that makes "intimacy" possible. I am daunted by the prospect and the imperative to find such a *rapprochement* between form, process, content, and context in my own essaying.

Though Montaigne seems radically iconoclastic in his bid to center the self and to decenter history and tradition, he can never hope to totally accomplish this. Montaigne's *Essaies* inaugurate a particular kind of synthesis of individual and collective that is inevitably and already about the cultural narratives of truth and discursive possibilities extant in his time. Even within such a limitation, Montaigne invents the very possibility and opening for doing what he goes on to try to do:

> In essaying, Montaigne discovered a literary instrument for turning common sense into good sense. The essay is, then, an experiment in the community of truth, and not a package of knowledge ruled by definitions and operations. The essay is a political instrument inasmuch as it liberates the writer and the reader from the domination of conventional standards of clarity and communication. The essay is a basic expression of literary initiative, authority, style, and gratuity accomplished against the limits of received language. (O'Neill, 1982, p. 9)

Montaigne's *Essaies* are about the creation of the sort of truths that can be a guide to a fulfilling and connected life. He writes with serious purpose; self-indulgent, rambling, and even frivolous though his essaying may at first appear. He often contradicts himself as his essay unfolds. He likes to provoke and toy with his reader. Perhaps my reader can begin to see why I am so captivated with this man and his work. He addresses, from the perspective of his own time, the very issues I am so anxious to understand. He does so in a form that is congenial to my needs and to the demands of my research proposition. His experiment in truth-making serves as a model for what I, too, intend to do as I "essay" possibilities with my reader; an antidote, or at least a counterpoint to the often hegemonic discourses of man.

Essaying Life's Structures

We are at any moment of our lives already engaged in the structures of life. Whether we see them as *essences* or as *cultural conventions and constructions* is a question that will be an ever present tension in this essay. It is not a question that will yield easy answers. In any case, we want and need to see experience as real and authentic, to feel that we are living a life that is true to ourselves. In the Euro-American culture and tradition, we are subject to the dominant cultural narrative of Self: as a self-contained and separate, unitary, authentic and agentic identity. It is raised to cult status in our time of political, economic, and epistemological uncertainty (it is also a good ploy in marketing lifestyles today). We *must* believe that we are inventing our lives--it would not do to be a mere copy or to be simply subject to the whims of others--but we must also believe that we are doing so within the safety of timeless and immutable truths about life.

Historicity already begins to emerge as an important tensionality. In the midst of any *moment* in life, we tend to think of that time as the "really real," which of course it is in an experiential sense. We do not ordinarily think of it as a narrative, part of a bigger narrative construction and unfolding over time, or an ideology. In the moment of the experience, its place in the cultural narratives of the time is invisible. To see it otherwise jeopardizes the moment of life to be experienced. To see it otherwise also risks the label of psychosis. But in the longer haul we deny history at our peril. If we are prone to deny our history, we are also prone to deny our intersubjectivity. There is an inevitable defining of the world in our own image, even as we search for universals. The Modern self is an egocentric self, it seems.

What of the autobiographical project and the question of authenticity? Does Montaigne understand, four hundred years ago, questions of cultural embeddedness and cultural relativity? Are we to believe him when he says he is writing autobiography, or when he says he is not? Is he telling us his truth at any given moment-- or is he merely trying to advance his project in the most persuasive fashion possible? Can there ever be a *real* self unmediated by culture? Can there be a culture unmediated by self? Can the self write itself, ever?

If writing a self is problematic, what of "reading" a self in either a bodily or textual sense? Do we have a right to interpret the life and utterances of another person, particularly from the safe distance of history? Is there any point in such an anachronistic reading? Whether we have the right or not, we do it because life *is* fundamentally about interpreting and creating meanings, and about the continuity in narratives of past, present and future. We use such a reading and interpretation to inform our being, to help us to understand something. That is the sense in which I would presume to read Montaigne or anyone else. Of course there are ethical dimensions to such a reading. We must read with attunement and respect for the historical dimension: what truths and frameworks are extant during a person's lifetime, what can be said and thought and known in that time, what the author claims and disclaims. We must be aware of the dangers in a selective or a reductionistic reading.

If authenticity of a self is often a problematic, what of generalization on men as a collective-- what can be said, with any certainty, of "men?" Manhood and the Self are iconic. The very notion and promise of freedom to create oneself as man is informed, enclosed and encapsulated within the cultural narratives of Modernity. A man constructs his life and consciousness through experiences, informed and enframed by the cultural narratives of his time, all in the brittle illusion of self-determination. If there are any truths at all in describing what it means to be a man--beyond the most basic and obvious aspect of his genitalia (and we will likely find some surprises even there) they are surely contingent and narrative truths. Such truths, subject to interpretation and variation though they may be, have very real resonance in the lives of men. If man (and woman) were "essentially" and immutably what they are and can be, what would be the point of this project? But even as I take the position that there is much in the narrative construction of manhood that can and must be talked about, I hear a powerful chorus of men arguing with me, saying, still, "You make far too much of this gender thing."

Essay as Genre

There are apt to be some structural tensionalities for my reader in this essay. The most important ones, perhaps, are related to the very idea of essay as genre. Montaigne's invention is first of a literary genre. The essay is not normally considered a research genre. To use it in both ways simultaneously is, not incidentally, still a challenge to the research canons as men have long envisioned them (but the essay has always been a somewhat iconoclastic genre, or should I say anti-genre?). Though I hope my essay attains a coherence and logic throughout, the selection of topics and references is neither linear nor historically sequential nor wholly representative of the literature available. I twist and turn through the issues using my own sense-making process as a guide. I hope and claim that it is not a totally eccentric or undisciplined process, however; for if anything becomes clear to me in my writing journey, it is that I, as Modern Man, am not able to totally subvert my strong need to "cover the territory" in the ways I have been taught.

If anything, then, I might wish for this essay to be more evocative and more iconoclastic, less belabored, less a slave to received knowledge. In important ways, this essay will be a collection and a particular organization of what I consider to be exemplary essays about men and manhood, intimate relation, and methodology. I quote prolifically from those essays, even more so than Montaigne does though hopefully in a more focussed way. Such prolific use of quotation is a particular feature of the Montaignean essay; one calculated to assure the reader that they are in learned hands. I hope my reader might feel that they, too, are in learned hands, though hopefully for other and better reasons. My intent is not only to make a point in a way that might engage my reader, but also to make spaces for diverse thought and voices.

There is another tensionality I must forewarn my reader about. In seeking to bring a wide range of issues and narratives to bear on the rather slippery notion of "men and intimacy" with which I open this essay, I run the risk of doing injustice to the thought of those I cite. There is a risk of reductionism, and a risk of conflation of incommensurables. These are serious risks indeed. I remind my reader that the essay reflects, in the first instance, my own interests, understandings, processes, foibles, biases, and lacunae-- and then my attempt to enlist the aid of my reader in bringing new sense to the issues. My covenant is to be as open as I can be.

I need to note here some other matters of literary technique. The first is the matter of clarifying notes. The formal academic paper or dissertation almost always relies heavily on notes to clarify, to document sources of ideas, to bracket digressions, and to assure the reader of the writer's scholarity. While I am no less concerned than any essayist about matters of clarity or credibility, I choose to follow Montaigne's custom of including everything in the text of the essay. The essay should rise or fall on its body, not on its qualifying comments or caveats or asides. It should be read, and judged, in its wholeness. There are risks in this. The advantage is that everything is visible to my reader. The disadvantage is that my reader may say that too much is visible.

The second concerns the matter of italicizing for emphasis. I simplify the citations, of which there are many, by only signifying the original author's emphasis by parenthetical notation. All other emphases are mine. Finally, I write in the present and historical present tense to lend a sense of immediacy to the essay and to help my reader connect, as I connect, not only with the thought of historical writers and writers about history, but also the person and the particular time they live in. In a very real sense-- a sense I hope to convey throughout the essay-- history is our constant companion in the present and in our anticipation of the future. We disconnect our ideologies and our narratives from the past at our peril. This may well be one of man's core problems. I know it has been one of my problems. Through this essay, I sharpen my own interest in the origins of things and my indebtedness to origins and evolutions-- I hope I convey this in ways that kindle or rekindle my reader's interests in such matters.

Coming to the Research Question

I begin this essay with a brief account of my particular spin on the mid-life crisis and on the age-old father-son struggles. It is this crisis that precipitates my interest in the research topic, but there are many other related questions. The questions seem related to family and work, the roles I play: husband, father, son, brother, friend, social work practitioner and educator, community member and citizen. They are questions about past, present, and future. For me as a man there is often a sense for me of something missing; a question of measuring up to some mythical standard "out there" in the playing fields of men. I wonder if other men ever feel such a sense of uncertainty, even lack?

I locate a most compelling justification for a dissertation on "men and intimacy" in my work as a social work educator. Increasingly, men's issues and issues of gender generally are at the forefront of social work practice and social work education. That the issues seem to be "increasingly" at the forefront may say as much about my preoccupations with gender issues (some of my students would say so) and my growing comfort and interest in acknowledging them, as about some bigger change in men's lives or consciousness--or women's lives or consciousness for that matter. But no, gender issues have finally found their place in the sun. The issues are real and important. Everybody, it seems, wants to "help" people, as long as the help doesn't entail too much questioning of touchy issues such as *power*. When there are struggles, they most often focus on social work practice as a site of gender tensionalities and questions: the traditional feminine narratives of caring and nurturing struggle with the hegemony of the instrumental and rational which has traditionally been more congenial to men's interests.

This essay is a doctoral dissertation in a department of curriculum and instruction. As such, it must first address my concern with the issues that emerge directly in a pedagogical relation with men and women who choose careers in education and the human service professions; and in particular about men as they are implicated in the work of those professional endeavors. What is this "men's issue" I allude to? It seems to be about intimacy and the language of intimacy and the body, however well hidden in rational, argumentive, or even "victim" language. I am acutely concerned with men's struggles to deal with these things: for their own sake; for the sake of their future clients or students, both male and female; and for the sake of the women whose learning is impeded as they feel silenced or as they stop to look after the men. I must admit that I am also concerned on my own behalf as an educator. As a male instructor, I can hardly claim to occupy a neutral space or a powerless space. And yet, it gets harder, if anything, to raise gender issues in a way that opens the conversation rather than shutting it down.

As I claim earlier, I most emphatically do not mean to advocate, whether actively or by implication, either the reproduction or passive acceptance of male hegemonies in the educational environment or anywhere else, or the demonizing of men and maleness. Quite the contrary in fact, as my reader will soon see, but I will show that we need new insights into the structures and practises that serve simultaneously to perpetuate male hegemony and to subjugate important parts of their being-in-relation. Clearly, issues of pedagogy cannot be separated from issues men face (or avoid) in their personal and work relationships with other persons and with their environment.

The research questions, then, are about men and the relationships they would describe as "intimate" or wish to be so. It is tempting, immersed as I am in the empirical tradition, to frame the questions in empirical terms. But no, it is questions of meaning that are apt to be most useful:

- What does it mean to men to be present to intimacy, to be absent from intimacy?
- If it is true, as I will argue, that men live in hegemonic relation to their Others, how do men live and experience such hegemony? How might such hegemony serve to hide pain and a sense of impotence in men's lives.

- Are there places and spaces for men's deeper, feeling selves in the face of the dominant ideologies/ideologies of our culture and time, and of men's history as men.
- Where and how do men find a language for matters of feeling and the body?
- How would men express their desires to be more intimate?
- If there is indeed a gender war between men and women, where are matters of intimacy and power to be found within it?
- What are the correspondences between the ways men relate to "their" world and the ways they construct themselves as men?

Coming to Terms

Gender can be understood as the narratives a culture constructs about the "sexed body" (Butler, 1990), a set of collective constructions of who we are as men and women in a particular time and cultural space. Gender narratives come to assume the force of social laws, and as such they have enduring truth value. Gender is not all that is life, but it is implicated in everything that is life. Life is always a deeply gendered and a historically-situated construction of meaning and action:

> (It) is an invention of human societies, a feat of imagination and industry. This feat is multi-faceted. One facet involves laborious efforts to transform male and female children into masculine and feminine adults.... Another facet involves creating and maintaining the social arrangements that sustain differences in men's and women's consciousness and behavior.... A third facet involves meaning: creating the linguistic and conceptual structures that shape and discipline our imagination of male and female, as well as creating the meaning of gender itself. Thus gender is a way of organizing everyday life. (Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1990, p. 4)

Sex is most often defined in terms of the "biology of maleness and femaleness . . . sexual anatomy (penises, vaginas), sex hormones and chromosomes, secondary sex characteristics, (beards, breasts), and coital and reproductive behavior" (Mackie, 1991, pp. 1-2); that which is assumed to be *essentially* male or female; that which is presumed to be given by nature or God. Sex and gender are most often defined in apposition, if not opposition, to each other as nature and nurture/culture, the given and the socially acquired. It is immediately apparent that such definitions, though probably still of comfort to many, are saturated with problematics and politics. The biological and theological are never pure, subject as they are to human construction and reconstruction (always to the advantage of one group or another). It seems more useful to speak of sex and gender as an indivisible *system*.

Man and manhood signify the givenness of the male sex. That may at first glance seem an unproblematic and undisputable “fact”--either one is, or one isn’t. But of course the question is never so simple as some might wish it to be. Manhood may prove to very illusory indeed.

Masculinity signifies the identity(s) that arise from biological manhood in a cultural milieu. Defining masculinity is a complex project that has long preoccupied men, if not women. As my ensuing discussion will show, earlier thought on masculinity always hearkens back to the essential body. Such a view is today enjoying a one of its periodic revivals and rehabilitations, Robert Bly’s mythopoetic work perhaps being the best known. Robert Connell (1995), among many other social scientists, takes the position that there is really very little about masculinity that can be linked to the strictly biological. He says contemporary definitions are based in notions of individual difference and agency that give rise to four categories of definition: essentialist definitions that look for a universal, core *quality*; positivist definitions that attempt to identify and measure what men *are*; normative definitions that identify what men *ought* to be; and semiotic definitions that identify *symbolic gender differences* (masculinity as the “not-feminine”)(pp. 68-70). Butler (1990), in a similar vein, suggests a tenuous and perhaps even non-existent link between masculinity and man or man’s body.

The plural form *masculinities* signifies a multiplicity of identity positions and possibilities, but always in relation to a hegemonic or dominant heterosexual *one*, however illusory its definition. Traditionally difference would be expressed quantitatively in relation to the particular qualities assumed to constitute real and enduring manhood. It is perhaps this aspect of multiplicity that sets the political Right to frothing at the mouth, unsettling as it does the orderly sorting of people into clear categories with roles to match; not to mention the unsettling of hegemonies (gender, race and ethnicity, and class, among others).

Generic man signifies the tradition of writing about all of humanity under the *nom de plume* of "man." Generic man is a cloak, intended to hide and deny the existence of links between manhood and power. It is a particular discursive stance and technique that effectively serves to obscure the problematic aspects of man's constructions and domination of "his" world. One of its rallying cries goes thus: "we are all just people, after all-- what is all the fuss over gender?" Generic man inscribes male power by denying it. Generic man is, then, neither a neutral nor a no-name brand, for "man" represents the particular power of man *qua man* to define the world. If woman as representation of man's Other (along with the child and nature with which she is identified) become invisible, even "erased" (Schor & Weed, 1994, p. 16) under the *nom de plume*, so does man's own body and passion. Emotion becomes the feminine, the Other.

Hegemonic masculinity is defined by Connell (1995): as "the cultural dynamic by which [men] claim and sustain a leading position in social life... the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees... the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 77). Hanke (1998) thickens this definition by focussing on the "social ascendency of a *particular version or model of masculinity* that, operating on the terrain of 'common sense' and conventional morality, defines 'what it means to be a man' (p. 186). Hegemony is not only about being a man among men; it must also take account of a dominant view of what a man is in a particular time. Connell notes that within hegemony, there are particular relations of domination and subordination between groups of men (gay and straight, for example). He argues that the majority of men benefit from a "patriarchal dividend" through their complicity in hegemony. The very invisibility of most hegemonies sustains its power; it is this invisibility which makes it possible for many men to deny their complicity. Connell shows that hegemony is built upon a mutually reinforcing system of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity.

Solitary man signifies man as a meaning-creating *individual*, and as a *man*. He is "solitary" in the sense that all human beings are ultimately so. But he is solitary also in the particular sense that he, as a man, embodies the Modern cultural narrative of the unitary and self-determining male Self. Probyn (1993) argues convincingly that the whole concept of "self" is a particularly *male* one. Man is solitary in the particular and poignant sense that he feels he is to "tough out" life on his own, no matter what. Solitary man will not easily identify with any notion of male hegemony--not because he wishes to be abusive or insensitive, but because he is apt to feel quite powerless in many areas of his life. That does not necessarily erase all of his "dividend" or complicity, but it may elicit more sympathy on his behalf.

Man/men-in-relation is my contingent convention to signify men involved in structures of relation that are framed in the contemporary cultural narrative as *intimacy*. Man's tradition is one of separation from Other-- I will employ an upper-case Other when referring to that tradition, and a lower-case when referring to the actual persons and entities, including himself, that men relates to.

Essentialism is the grand discourse about essences. "The body is, of course, essentialism's great text" (Rooney, in Schor & Weed, 1994, p. xx). In this essay, essences of manhood and womanhood are of central interest. Grosz (in Schor & Weed, 1994) posits three variants of essentialism: *biologism*, referring to biologically-limited capacities; *naturalism*, referring to biologically, theologically or ontologically-defined "nature"; and *universalism*, referring to socially-defined categories, functions and activities. The essentialist narrative of man addresses the body--man's great taboo and absence--indirectly by ascribing the body's most loathsome and fearsome qualities to Woman, linking her with Nature, and subjugating both. But accounts of gender inevitably become essentialist (the "universalist" variant) in themselves through narratives that pose as certain, unitary, immutable and ahistorical truth. Essentialism, then, transcends biologism in that it is clearly about the power of discourse and language: "If to hold concepts in common is to essentialize, then language always essentializes" (Scholes, in Scholes & Weed, 1994, p. xi).

The tension between essentialism and constructivism--exemplified in discourses about sex and gender-- is a public blood-feud right now in many of society's texts. The feud plays out in different ways, from "difference feminism," to the politics of the Right, to "boys will be boys" revivals exemplified in books such as Michael Gurian's (1997) *The Wonder of Boys*. Each account wants to claim the high ground of truth. The discourses of sex-gender distinction are clear manifestations of the dualistic thinking that is the very hallmark of Cartesian man's cultural narratives. The debate can be understood as a debate and dialectic between received and constructed language and knowing. The debate is obviously about power. It is also about social responsibility--the constructed self must be responsible for its self-construction, while the essential self can languish in his givenness. But the constructed self and the essential self/body are really only at war if it suits someone's purposes. Keeping the essentialist debate alive may forestall our culture's inevitable confrontation with difference, and *men's* confrontation what this means for their sense of identity.

This essay is about men, and about men's constructions of themselves. The master narratives of manhood are about subjugation of body, in the service and name of truth, rationality, and power. When I make reference to men in a collective sense, I will always do so with the intent of signifying the cultural narratives that *inform* men's being and constructions of themselves, rather than any deterministic sense of categorization. However, the charge of "essentialism" cannot so easily be sidestepped. Any discourse that refers to "men" in a collective sense-- and I cannot but do this-- reflects the universalizing variant of essentialism.

Though I want to say that this project is not about some unitary and universal essence of men and manhood, I cannot avoid the critique that says I privilege the narratives of the Euro-American, Caucasian, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied men; even that I implicitly cast Other narratives as deficient ones. *Nollo contendre*. For the moment, we will have to live with the tensions, questions, and dangers: "So long as the critique of essentialism is understood not as exposure of error, our own or others,' but as an acknowledgement of the dangerousness of what one must use.... *The critique of essentialism (is) an acknowledgement of its usefulness"* (Spivak, in Schor & Weed, 1994, p. xii).

Authenticity and the very possibility of authenticity in life and relationships is an important issue closely related to essentialism. At a cultural level, authenticity of phenomena and structures would call for an essence, a unitary (albeit complex) structure of things. Cultural stories of authenticity can be hegemonic ones or commercial ones that we "choose" to buy into (this may amount to the same thing). An authentic self also requires an essence, an unchanging identity. I will suggest at this beginning point, with some hesitation, the possibility of a "real" self for men that is subjugated or repressed; a subjugation of emotion by the dominant narratives available to them. Intimacy as we now understand it is only possible between real and self-determining selves.

The postmodern crisis in meaning and legitimation speaks to the human search for essence and authenticity (I essentialize here, of course) and the impossibility of ever attaining/obtaining the object of the search. The crisis also speaks to authenticity and the intimacy of sovereign selves as discursive constructions and aspects of a grand narrative that is crumbling before our eyes/bodies. The hunger for authenticity is palpable in our time of warp-speed change; leading, as Městrović (1997) will argue, to a sinister manufacturing and recycling operation. But we cannot sink into cynicism on this point, for surely a life that does not strive toward a measure of genuineness and transparency would be no life at all. Like its putative parent, essentialism, authenticity remains a "dangerous" concept that we must use nonetheless. I signify its problematic nature in my essay by enclosing references to the "real," the "honest," the "authentic" in quotes.

Synopsis

The essay as *process* is underway, beginning with hints of my place in the essay and in issues of men and intimacy. I acknowledge my debt to Michel de Montaigne, hoping that my reader might share at least a little of my interest in this man ahead of his time, and his invention, the personal essay. The research question and its supporting concepts are defined in a contingent way; signalling, I hope, the many problematics to come in the body of the essay. In the next chapter I address what may seem an obvious question--*Why Men?*--with the hope both of explicating the relations of contemporary men, and of thickening our understandings of the problematics in such relations.

Chapter Two

WHY MEN?

Introduction

> He is depressed. I don't know what about--maybe it's a mid-life crisis. He can't or won't tell me what is going on. The more I try to reach him, the more distant he seems to get. He says I'm nagging, whining, pushing him around. We don't have a life together anymore.... I find out that he's seeing some younger woman. Sometimes I think, what did I do wrong? And then I think, why can't men *deal* with this stuff? All they have to do is talk. God, I talk with my friends about everything. What's this strong silent thing? I feel so confused, so hurt and so angry.... You know, the worst part is that I *know* all of this is for nothing because the same old problems will come up when the novelty wears off with this new woman. No, even that isn't the worst part. I have to deal with our adolescent son who has so many questions. He takes it all out on me because I'm *there*. Why can't my ex' even talk to his own son? *Can you tell me what's the matter with men these days*? (Jane, 42)

Jane expresses the dilemmas of men with uncanny accuracy. What, indeed, is the matter with men these days? I seek, in this chapter, to come to a more clear understanding of the issues of contemporary men-in-relation. The title of the dissertation already stakes my claims, perhaps, but we must come to a much deeper understanding of the "absence" in men's relations--if indeed it is an absence. My reader is entitled to ask for some things at this point. My female reader may want some evidence that I will critique male hegemonies and ways of being; that I will not simply recycle the tradition of centering man's position in the world. My male reader may want some proof that "men and intimacy" is really an issue of concern, some evidence for my assertion that *men* have a problem or that manhood is somehow problematic, some assurance perhaps that I will take a position sympathetic to men or at least one that is even-handed. My reader may not wish to take either side, or to give assent to the idea that there are sides or that there may be a war going on here. I will take up these challenges here by trying to "stake out the territory," as men say; first by reflecting on some moments in my own experience that raise questions for me, and then by reflecting on a smorgasbord of moments extracted from the broader world that also raise questions to and about men.

Personal Narratives

- It is a bright sunny day on the playground in 1955. Everyone is anxious to get outside to play ball; everyone, it seems, but me. I dread these days when teams are chosen, when I expect to be chosen last or, worse, to have the captains make a deal for who has to take me. I usually find myself playing fielder, hoping a ball doesn't come my way. I wish I could just catch the ball, throw it, and be a part of the team. *You throw and run like a girl.* I can't wait to get back inside, to be at the top of the class again.

- I persuade my father to come out on the deck for some air on one of those "just right" Central Alberta evenings. It seems so fitting somehow that as I struggle with deciding how to introduce the resource book on *mentoring* that I am writing, I am sitting with my first mentor. Or is he? I have never thought of my father as a mentor. I tell him a little about the project, then ask him if he remembers *The Day*. He says he doesn't, and so I remind him, yet again, of what has become a family legend:

  > It is a hot and sunny day in the town. We are working on an addition to the Legion Hall. My task is to drill several anchor holes in the old basement wall with a star drill and hammer. I am a tall and awkward 15 year old. I would rather be anywhere else, doing anything else, than this seemingly meaningless job. It is that time of the afternoon that seems to drag on forever. The holes are not deepening, not at all. My father comes over to check on progress. He is most unhappy, not so much with the holes, it seems, as with my attitude. He gives me a little lecture, ending with an admonition to "Take pride in your work."

- The day I leave on the train for my first job is a momentous one. It is momentous for me in my refusal to feel and my refusal to have my family see me off; momentous for my mother in her grieving as her first-born strikes out into the world. I am later told she is eating cantaloupe, crying as the train leaves. The cantaloupe is now our family's symbol for grief, my symbol for denial.

- Our son calls from Toronto to say he has a cancerous tumor that needs to be removed. We immediately make plans to go to be with him. Many people expresss concern and support. He is a man now, and yet my first image is of him in his little lumberjack jacket when he is three years old. Neither he nor I seem able to speak of our fears.... Deep down, I can't shake the feeling that I haven't been a great father.

- I am part of a ten day men's earth-honoring hike in a pristine mountain park, which if you knew me would make quite a story in itself. One afternoon, I choose to wander, alone, up a little creek. Around each bend is a new and more stunning arrangement of fragile alpine flowers. My boots get soaking wet in the flowing water as I walk, spellbound, upstream to the source. The creek gets narrower and narrower until it is the a merest trickle. As I rest on a rock trying to take in this incredible beauty, I come to the realization that "something" I have been looking for so long is here-- inside my-self. I have in some very literal and palpable way come to its source. I am overcome with the beauty and the discovery. I sit for a long time. After a while my thoughts turn to the other men, and what I want to share of my discovery... I bring them to the little creek that evening, and I try to talk, but the words do not come. I am literally speechless, and utterly vulnerable, even though I count these men as friends. They assure me that they understand-- they even dub the creek "Duane's Creek"-- but I still feel utterly exposed.

Questions:

- I learn to fight with books and words. "Knowing" of a certain kind is a very effective way to deal with my "inner playground" by maintaining distance. Do other men ever feel this need? Do I want and need to be distant any more?

- I have grown up with a sense of being "different," of not fitting the mold of what a real man is supposed to be. It is painful still, though important somehow, to tell of these little moments. I wonder if there is any such thing as a "real man" If there is, do I want to be like him? I can usually find places of comfort to be the man I am, to use whatever talents I have in the best way I know. But.... deep down the questions still linger.

- My Dad would never be described as a "man's man." And yet, I would never describe him as weak. Would people say I am like him?

- Our son's illness shatters my sense of certainty and security. I wonder why I find it so hard to accept the support of others in such a time?

- Something very powerful happened on the hike; something of a homecoming perhaps. I now wonder why it seems such a big deal.

The Gender War

Moments:

- To compare this brotherly affection with affection for women, even though it is the result of our choice--it cannot be done; nor can we put the love of women in the same category. Its ardour, I confess... is more active, more scorching, and more intense. But it is an impetuous and fickle flame... that only holds us by one corner. (Montaigne, 1958, I, 28, p. 137)

- Men mistakenly expect women to think, communicate, and react the way men do; women mistakenly expect men to feel, communicate, and respond the way women do. We have forgotten that men and women are supposed to be different.... When you remember that men are from Mars and women are from Venus, everything can be explained. (Gray, 1992, p. 10)

- I watched World War II movies when I was a child. The Bomb threat grew with me. I was chased and hurt by male relatives. Who cares what happens to me, because I'm a successful male impersonator, but it matters that every life might end in a fight between men. It also matters that women, children, and less dominant men do not have equal access to food, resources, opportunity, happiness, and protection by law.... I've always thought that men might kill me and I hate them for it. (Holzer, in *Esquire*, 1991, p. 144)

- I am struck by how often in a marriage with changing roles, or during times of work-family stress, a man will not talk it over with his wife or ask her for help, saying that he feels like a little kid or it seems 'unmanly.' What men are saying is that they feel infantilised when needy around women, because women are supposed to give help only to

> little boys.... We don't learn to negotiate with women or to feel comfortable about our own vulnerability--it must be hidden and repressed-- so when we ask, we do so in manipulative or subtle ways, seeking to have the woman give us what we need *without our taking responsibility for asking or receiving*. (Osherson, 1986, p. 11)

Questions:

- It is striking to note the pervasiveness even today of Montaigne's view of Woman as Lack. How is it, then, that men seem to depend so heavily on the very gender they hold in contempt? What does Woman represent for contemporary men?

- I cannot count the times when women, upon hearing of my interest in men's issues, have told me of their concern for the man in their lives. So often the story unfolds as Jane tells it. Do we accept women's version, that men are deficient in communication skills or the will to resolve issues, that "Men just don't get it."? Do we accept men's version, that women always expect too much and never appreciate men for what they are and do: "I have it hard"? Or, do men and women simply need to recognize that they communicate in different ways, as the *Mars and Venus* man, John Gray, claims?

- Contemporary men often say that women are their best and even their only friends. Why do they so often seem to tremble at the risk and vulnerability of showing their real selves in these relations?

- Men reach for women in a sexual way, reassuring themselves and finding a momentary sense of fusion, comfort and nurture there; but they often find it difficult to "let go" in other ways. How do we understand men's experiences and responses to the demand to "be real," to give more of themselves?

Man to Man

Moments:

- The locker room had become a kind of home to me . . . I often enter tense and uneasy, disturbed by some event of the day. Slowly, my worries fade as I see their unimportance to my male peers. I relax, my concerns lost among relationships that are warm and real, but never intimate, lost among the constants of an athlete's life. Athletes may be crude and immature, but they are genuine when it comes to loyalty. The lines of communication are clear and simple... *We are at ease in the setting of satin uniforms and shower nozzles.* (Bradley, in Messner, 1992, p. 215)

- Male friendships often resemble the relationships between very young children who engage in 'parallel play.' These children want to be close to each other in the sandbox, for example, but they just move the sand around without sharing or helping and *usually* without hurting each other. They don't really interact *with* each other; they merely play side by side. [emphasis authors'](Strikwerda & May, 1992, p. 97)

- Most men, particularly if they think about it, if they let themselves feel their personal truth about it, will admit that they are disappointed in their friendships with other men. Men may have wives, they may even have women friends, but their relationships with other men, which could be a true echo of their own manhood, are generally characterised by thinness, insincerity and even chronic wariness. (Miller, 1983, p. xi)

- 'Funny thing,' [Curly's wife] said. 'If I catch any one man, and he's alone, I get along fine with him. But just let two of the guys get together an' you won't talk. Jus' nothing but mad.' She dropped her fingers and put her hands on her hips. 'You're all scared of each other, that's what. *Ever'one of you's scared the rest is goin' to get something on you.*' (Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*, cited in Kimmel, 1994)

- Carter Heywood [contends] 'that the fear of mutuality is the fear of our intrinsic interrelatedness' or the fear of our fundamental interdependence.... For us as gay men our fears of intimacy, of sexuality-in-relation rather than in self-distanced promiscuity, may be further complicated by the failures of our previous attempts to create intimate and whole spousal relationships, as well as by our enculturation to autonomous self-isolated manhood. We may, in fact, be terrified of and hold ourselves unworthy of 'what we desire most heartily--to love and be loved for who we really are.' (citing Heywood in Clark, 1992, pp. 129-130)

Questions:

- It is fashionable today to say that men have a problem with intimacy. Is this so, or is it cliché? How do we make sense of men's apparent ability and willingness to be "intimate"in the theaters of sports and war--but apparently not in the everyday world?

- The "parallel play" metaphor invoked by Strikwerda and May does seem to describe a very common way that men interact with men. Would we want to say such relation is not intimate, not meaningful, perhaps not even relation? Do we know what meanings such ways hold for men?

- Is Curly's wife right in saying that men are scared of each other? If so, how do we understand the roots of such fear and its implications for men's relationships? What are the roots of homophobia, and how is it implicated in constructions of manhood?

- Could it be that "intimacy" is a particularly feminine construction, most relevant in feminine spaces such as the home? Can we envision what a male construction of "intimacy" would look like?

Learning the Manhood Thing

Moments:

- Manliness can only be taught by men, and not by those who are half men, half old women. (Baden-Powell, in Kimmel, 1996, p. 157)

- A boy is, in large part, hard-wired to be who he is. We can't, in large part, change who he is. We can teach him how to develop who he is with confidence, and toward a direction that contributes to our world. In this view, our best choices in nurturing him revolve around *knowing who and what he is*, then *channelling his energy in ways appropriate to him*-- not to what or who we believe politically he ought to be. (Gurian, 1996, p. 5)

- I think the most painful memory I have of growing up is of my father. You know, my dad never came to one of my games, ever. *I don't remember that I ever told him how* *important it was to me--I just kept thinking he would show up some day.* A while ago I told this story to a group of men at a workshop. Later this guy--he'd be a little older than me-went up in the bleachers while we were fooling around with a basketball. He caught my eye and gave me the high sign. That was all. I just crumpled into a heap and sobbed.... You know, after that it seemed like I could start to talk to my Dad about some of these things. (Keith, 37)

- The press to identify with father creates the crucial dilemma for boys. *Boys have to give up mother for father, but who is father?* Often a shadowy figure at best, difficult to understand. Boys rarely experience fathers as sources of warm, soft nurturance. The most salient adult object available for the boy is his mother, or other female caretakers such as relatives and child care providers.... If father is not there to provide a confident, rich model of manhood, then the boy is left in a vulnerable position: having to distance himself from mother without a clear and understandable model of male gender upon which to base his emerging identity. (Osherson, 1986, p. 6)

Questions:

- Gurian's statement captures succinctly one side of the central theoretical and political dilemma of this study and of all gender studies: the great essentialist debate. Are boys/men born, or made? The project, on these terms, would be to discover what men naturally and actually are. If, as the very concept "gender" implies, men are primarily products of their culture, then the challenge is a bit more complicated. How do we reconcile such a binary?

- Keith captures in a poignant way the feelings and dilemma of what has been called "father hunger." When I later ask him to tell me a little more about his father, I am quite astonished to hear him say that his father is quite a sensitive and caring man. How do we understand this apparently profound contradiction? What is this seemingly inexplicable barrier that keeps father and son distant from each other? What is the craving and the need that seems such a strong force in our lives? Is this an issue for my generation and Keith's, or do younger men still struggle with its remnants?

- Few would say that fathers are not important in the lives and socialization of boys. But we must ask, how important, and in what particular ways? Why are fathers so often absent, in actuality or in an emotional sense, particularly in the face of such a strong injunction for boys to be "not like mother"? What do boys lose in this injunction to separate from mother?

Man and his Tools

Moments:

- The man, in his rough work in the open world, must encounter all peril and trial; to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded or subdued; often misled; and always hardened / You may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. (Ruskin, 1865, in McLean, 1992, p. 3)

- It's not just a cliché, you know. Men just can't seem to let go of that remote control. But they never stop long enough to *watch* anything.

- The type of thinking we accept today as preeminently rational and legitimate is technical calculative thinking, an instrumental reason whose hallmark is expediency, exactness and control, a rationality for effective ordering, making and doing.... Non-instrumental philosophy, much like the language of women as women hitherto, lies outside the currently sanctioned bounds of 'serious discourse.' (Burch, 1986, pp. 8-9)

- The first thing you've gotta do is get the best 20 ounce hammer you can buy. Now there are steel shank men and fibreglass men, but I wouldn't give you shit for the steel. A good hammer is part of your arm when you learn to swing it right, like you mean it. The more you think about it, the more likely you are to give your thumb a whack.

- [Lillian Smith says] 'What Freud mistook for her lack of civilisation is woman's lack of *loyalty* to civilisation.' Civilized Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is Other--outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What

> I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and the wilderness, to be used as I see fit. (Leguin, 1989, p. 45)

Questions:

- Ruskin's 1865 statement stands still a poignant reminder of men's hardships and the tyranny of his "perils and trials." But it hints at a more sinister subjugation of his Others to a technological imperative. If men are not in harmony with the earth, if for them the very earth that sustains life is Other and object for instrumental domination, can they hope and claim to be in harmony and intimacy with women, children, men, themselves?

- Is individualism and the instrumentalism and "technical calculative" thinking represented in contemporary technology and globalism man's greatest achievement, or his greatest problematic? Burch goes on to ask whether such a mode of being allows for "realizing new meanings," even for human caring. Where do we find intimacy?

- Men can point to technological achievements with justifiable pride. How do we understand their reluctance, even inability, to take on a more reflexive stance; a stance that would require them to examine the terms of engagement with technology, to look inward, to imagine a more human world at the end of the technological tunnel?

Men and Knowing

Moments:

- It's really true--men just hate to ask for directions, or to admit that they might be lost. I would drive a long way before I would stop and ask.

- Men have dominated over women, by and large, because they have managed to gain a stranglehold on *meaning*. What it means to be a man, what it means to be a woman; what jobs constitute men's work and what jobs constitute women's work. It is through the ability to control the ways in which society thinks abut these things that has provided men with the basis of their power.... The point is that... men have dominated many of the key institutions which help to produce and recycle meaning.... *It is usually their versions of the* *world which, in the words of Clarke et al. (1981) 'command the greatest weight and influence [and] secrete the greatest legitimacy.'* (Edley & Wetherell, 1996, p. 107)

- Yet there is a danger here of overstating the level of autonomy or agency which men enjoy. Men's collective interests and their disproportionate power and influence are not maintained through active and self-conscious male conspiracies.... The fact of the matter is, of course, that paradoxical though it might sound, *men are simultaneously the producers and the products of culture; the masters and slaves of ideology.* (Edley & Wetherell, 1996, p. 109)

Questions:

- Edley and Wetherell express in a powerful way a dilemma that pervades both the theory and practice of manhood: how has man managed to get such a stranglehold on meaning? Without in any way demeaning women's struggles within patriarchal ideologies, I take the risk of wondering: when men "win" the gender war (whether the epistemological one or the material one), do they *ipso facto* also lose the intimacy "battle"?

- If the "stranglehold" on meaning is indeed an issue, how do we understand the vast chasm between collective man's power as expressed in ideology and institution--and the felt and lived experience of solitary man who may plaintively say "I don't have that kind of power"?

Silence at the Heart

Moments:

- It is no wonder, too, that the female brain developed better handling of emotive data.... Given, too, the daily necessity of the male to kill animals and, in war or other protection activity, humans, it is no wonder the male brain de-emphasized emotive and verbal skills, as well as empathy skills. (Gurian, 1996, p. 19)

- I've got this bee in my bonnet about all the men who blow their heads off (one every two days in Alberta this year). And I'm wondering what this tells us about men's ability to express the hurt that goes on inside? I asked some guys about this the other day after a Fish and Game meeting, and you know what--*they all said they knew what I was talking about*. I was amazed at that. (Ken)

- It would be interesting to locate the historical moment when men stopped crying in public (Williams, 1989). To answer this question of why, in general, men do not cry in public, one would need to analyse the emergence of the concepts of masculinity, public and private, in their material articulations to other structures of the social, as one simultaneously examined the experiential level of crying and not crying in public. (Probyn, 1993, p. 19)

- I have suffered more than you people will ever know... My body is such that I keep a lot inside me and nobody ever knows how bad I truly feel" (Alderman K. Kozak, *Edmonton Journal*, 1991, in response to a reporter's question about his assault of his wife).

- If the majority of men are emotionally illiterate then the social construction of gender, of masculinity, creates an absence, a loss, a silence at the heart of men's social relations. (Metcalf, in Rutherford, 1992, p. 6)

- [The] male issue is to accept our genitals the way they are most of the time . . . holding onto exaggerations of what the penis is like at erection as the proper image of masculine self-definition.... We males need to honor and celebrate our personal experience with our genitals. We men have often reduced women to their biological sexuality [while avoiding or denying] the truth of our own biological sexuality. *We have fabricated a steel fig leaf.* (after Haddon, in Flannigan-Saint-Aubin, 1994, p. 239)

Questions:

- Man's voice is strong on many matters. But he is eerily silent on some matters closest to the heart. How do we understand the remarkable silence of men on such a central fact of their existence as the *body*? This has become cliché, even parody: "Why can't men cry"? I should perhaps ask, how do men draw boundaries around the few situations, like the playing field or the battle won, where crying is alright?

- What meanings does *silence* have for men? The image of the "strong silent type" has come to denote a particular kind of strength. What does silence say about power, what does power say about silence--the silence of silencing? How do we understand the body's silence in the genesis of violence?

- Why is it that relatively few men, still, dare to talk about the *rule of silence* on matters emotional? What are the rules, and how do men learn them so well? Do men have a language for emotion? If men cannot express their inner lives, are there any spaces for intimate relation with Other?

Men Who Would be Helpful

Moments:

- Elgin, one of four men in a class of 30, usually sits quietly. Sometimes he seems to be listening to the proceedings, while other times he works on something seemingly unrelated to the class. Today we are talking about questions of men and violence. Suddenly he straightens up in his seat: "I've told some of you about the abuse and racism that happened to me when I was a kid. I don't tolerate any kind of violence any more. This feminist stuff is bullshit. I know just as many women as men who are violent--it's no different. You guys (*sic*) are all way too hard on men, and you're way too hard on us Promise Keepers." The other men remain silent, as do most of the women. Two women speak in support of Elgin's point.

- A week later, Elgin's picture is published as the "Sunshine Boy" of the day in the local tabloid. His classmates cheer.

- Allan comes in late, again, and takes a seat by himself in the middle of the room (the class is arranged in a circle). He quickly tunes in to the discussion and takes an argumentative position on the issue. As usual, it is to advocate that there are no victims; that anyone can do anything they want if they are prepared to work hard enough. I try to gently encourage him to allow space for others to talk. I "sit" on him by keeping a speaker's list. He doesn't seem to get it.

- Hugman (1991) notes that social work is... concerned with the emotional, reproductive, and domestic areas of life in its focus on the coping of families and individuals.' He also characterizes it as *'the scrutiny of women's domestic performance, controlling caring and caring through control.'* (cited in Pringle, 1995, p. 24)

- Nel Noddings (1984) describes *empathy*, so often expressed metaphorically as "walking in the shoes of another," as "a peculiarly rational, Western, masculine way of looking at 'feeling with' another person." We must rather, she says, "allow ourselves to be transformed" by the Other. (p. 34)

- Jocelyn is affronted when I say that there are some problems with describing the relation of a parent and child, instructor and student, social worker and client, as "intimate." "I share a lot in my assignments, and that really offends me when you say that."

Questions:

- It is paradoxical indeed that even while men's issues so frequently become issues for the whole class, the program, the institution, and the profession concerned--when given the opportunity, so few men are able or willing to speak from the heart about their inner lives.

- How is it that the denial of issues such as violence by men has such power to close debate, *even when the instructor is male, even when men are in a minority*? How is it that so many women, many of whom have been victimized by men, seem to feel the need to speak on men's behalf?

- If *control* (self-control, control of Other, control of the conditions of relation) is a major theme in the lives of men and in the construction of masculinities, what are the implications for men when working with female clients? What are the implications for men as they learn through professional discourses about openness and the reflective application of power?

- What are the implications for men who express either verbally or behaviorally that they have been wounded, victimized or abused in their lives? Men who could be identified in terms of "subordinate" and "marginalized" masculinities? (Connell, 1995) seem to find it impossible to see their complicity in hegemonic masculinity. What kind of learning experiences and instructional strategies are called for if such men are not to approach their own work either as victims or as controllers, even abusers?

- Social work is, at its best, takes both a political and empowering stance toward people, and a remarkably intimate stance with people. Men, even men in social work, often seem to find the junction of the personal and the political realms to be a troublesome space indeed because it is seen as a feminine space. Is there hope for men in a profession centered on this junction, on *caring*?

- Whatever the issues for male students and practitioners of social work, male instructors are deeply implicated, whether as models of male caring, or as authority figures. Is a kind of intimacy possible in such a relation? Is complicity in male hegemony inevitable? What of the male instructor's pronouncements about acceptable/correct ways for men to "be" in social work?

Synopsis

Questions upon questions! Some may be answerable though the answers are likely to be complex and multi-layered ones. Some are rhetorical, useful to the extent that they might offer some structure to the essay process and some provocation to think in new ways. Some hint at the great unsolved mysteries of life. By now my reader might observe that I leave no stone unturned in problematizing every aspect of man's being. Is there no hope?

It could be that men are *not* the problem, that there is in fact no problem--men are simply different from women. Yes, it could be, though the evidence overwhelmingly contradicts such a view even by men's own accounts. It could be that men are just "hardwired" to be the way they are, as the essentialist revivalists will say. Yes, it could be. But it is more likely that there are some serious problematics in men's socialization. I leave this chapter taking the latter position: *There are some major problems with the very structure and lived experience of manhood and masculinity.* I will return to these problems after doing a preliminary exploration of the Modern construction we call *intimacy* in the next chapter, and an exploration of the possibilities of *essay as methodology* in the following one.

Chapter Three

WHY INTIMACY?

Introduction

> One very cold night a group of porcupines were huddled together for warmth. However, their spines made proximity uncomfortable, so they moved apart again and got cold. After shuffling repeatedly in and out, they eventually found a distance at which they could still be comfortably warm without getting pricked. This distance they henceforth called decency and good manners. (Wilson, cited in Twitchell, 1987)

> Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die. (E. M. Forster, 1921, *Howard's End*, p. 1)

I cannot resist appropriating Wilson's clever little story of boundaries and limitations, for I think it captures something of what intimacy might mean for men. Having introduced a multitude of problematics for men and manhood-in-relation in the preceding chapter, it is perhaps time to visit matters of *intimacy* in a more explicit way. *What is this thing that we call intimacy? Is it possible in our time to speak of a true or authentic intimacy as some unitary and essential state we might work toward*? If not, if intimacy is constructed--constructed, perhaps, in a multitude of ways--what forms might it take in an era that is called "technological" or "postmodern," or "global"; inadequate and simplistic though such descriptors might seem to be? What are the themes of intimacy; whether it is intimacy experienced, craved, sought, avoided, subjugated, feared, or even denied? We might ask whether intimacy and gender are simply parallel constructions-- or are their themes interwoven as I already begin to suggest? What are the themes of intimacy as men experience and make sense of them? "Only connect." It seems so simple, and yet it is clearly not.

Intimacy as Achilles' Heel

> *A rationalistic culture is always trying to turn our emotions against us*--thereby estranging us as men from our emotional lives. We take this so much for granted that we do not realize how this undermines our sense of self and our sense of the `reality' of our everyday experience. We also do not appreciate how this denies us the personal power we might otherwise have, if we did not denigrate our emotionality as an integral part of our masculinity, to challenge the structures of power and domination which form our everyday experience at work and in the family. (Seidler, 1991, p.53)

Seidler expresses well the Cartesian dilemma for men. It is tempting to cast the matter in the stereotypical statement about men: "They simply can't express emotion," or in the currently fashionable notion of "emotional illiteracy." For men, emotions come to represent *vulnerability*. It has become a commonplace in discourses of gender and intimacy to express men's difficulties with intimacy in terms of this vulnerability. "No gain without pain," the truism goes.

Vulnerability, according to OED, is the "quality or state of being vulnerable; that may be wounded; susceptible of receiving wounds or physical injury; open to attack or injury of a non-physical nature." If intimacy is a truly reciprocal relation, there is infinite possibility for creation of new "in-between." It seems clear enough, though, that to open oneself to this in-between is also to make oneself vulnerable. If showing one's vulnerability is to risk showing one's-self, it is also to take the risk that makes us responsible (response-able) to and for the Other. Is such vulnerability and responsibility merely a result of intimacy-- or is it also the very condition for intimacy? Rowan seems to say it is the latter, and in the strongest of terms:

> My angle is to say that unless men actually allow themselves to be wounded, to let that wound go very deep, to shatter their ego, to really experience that shattering, that collapse, and the results from that, they can't heal the wound. Either for themselves or for women or for anybody else-- *you've got to have the wound before you can heal it*. (cited in Wetherell & Griffin, 1991, p. 370)

Rowan's statement is a bold one indeed. He seems to suggest that the "wound," far from being an incidental barrier to intimacy between man and woman, is really a necessary precondition. This flies in the face of the injunction against vulnerability in men's tradition. There is a sense here of a particular point of vulnerability. For men, vulnerability is captured in the legend of *Achilles' Heel*.

No matter how well-armored a man may be, intimacy is the soft spot that is exposed; it is the spot where he can be reached-- and injured. Or so he often must feel. What is it that makes men feel so vulnerable in intimate relation? What particular meanings is such vulnerability apt to have for men?

Men have long said that women "play by different rules", that they are mysterious, unpredictable, and so on. Perhaps what men are really saying here is that women seem to be too predictably comfortable with intimacy, that women expect too much of men, of relationship, of marriage. *And on the same terms, women have the power to wound.* The site of the feared wound is not the heel, of course. It is all of what phallocentric manhood "stands" for. This may or may not be the particular wound that Rowan has in mind, but it is the wound that is central to Modern man's sense of himself. Unfortunately for him and for his Others, it is also the wound or the threat that may not, at all costs, be spoken. Men speak often of having to "measure up"--but they do not explicitly say that the measuring up is about the phallic standard.

In what ways does making oneself vulnerable also open the possibility of healing, the healing that comes of human connection? As a kindly colleague draws to my attention in a moment of my own vulnerability and self-doubt (an interesting notion indeed, that of doubting one's very selfhood), *vulnerarius* refers to "a healing of wounds; a plant, drug, or composition useful in the curing of wounds." Faced with the vulnerability of another, we cannot but respond and take care of their need. *What is capable of wounding is also capable of healing*. "No pain, no gain," the aphorism.

I am intrigued by a special instance of vulnerability. It has become commonplace to say that men are suckers for the sentimental--that they have an impaired sense of judgement about "falling in love." It is often men, not women, who make the grand gestures of love. But if to really love is to be intimate, can we so suddenly "fall" in love? There is an all or nothing quality here that on the surface of it challenges the notion of men's self-control in matters emotional. How do we make sense of this state of childlike innocence and vulnerability, in the face of the cultural injunction against it? Is it simply an instance of men's illiteracy in matters emotional, a sign of "weakness" that he will feel sheepish about afterwards? It is easy to pathologize and even make fun of sentimentality in men. But perhaps we could read it instead as an important sign of possibilities.

> Another thing I learned-- if you cry, the audience won't. A man can cry for his horse, for his dog, for another man, but he cannot cry for a woman. A strange thing. He can cry for the death of a friend or a pet. But where he's supposed to be boss, with his children or his wife, something like that, he better hold 'em back and let *them* cry. (citing John Wayne in Balswick, 1988, p. 1)

Men's unwillingness or inability to cry in public is often taken as a paradigm case of their difficulties with feelings and thus with intimacy. Which is it, then--unwillingness, or inability? Crying is an involuntary and deeply emotional bodily response to a particular situation defined by the person as "moving," either in a joyful or a sad sense. Crying represents a surrender or letting go of one's-self. To deny tears is to deny the body its imperative. To deny tears is to deny important aspects of the situation that defines and calls for them-- to be "strong" is in many ways to shut oneself off from life. .

To cry is to surrender. To surrender is an ultimate vulnerability. How do men experience passivity and surrender, allowing and succumbing rather than seeking and controlling, being rather than doing? Surely such states belong to the feminine. If man must say "no" to the feminine, does he thereby say "no" to intimacy?

> [Surrender] is my favorite theme in the intimacy system because it captures that gentleness and spontaneity, that passivity and loss of control which both Buber and Maslow affirm. Recall that [Buber says] 'the Thou encounters me by grace- it cannot be found by seeking'. (Maslow says) intimacy is '*gentle, delicate, unintruding, undemanding, able to fit itself passively to the nature of things as water gently soaks into crevices*.' (McAdams, 1990, p.48)

Getting Close and Personal

Intimacy, according to OED, comes from the Latin *intimus* which pertains to "that which is inmost, deepest, profound or close in friendship." Definitions of the noun form include: "close familiarity; closeness of knowledge or observation; pertaining to the inmost thoughts or feelings; proceeding from, concerning or affecting one's inmost self; closely personal; inner or inmost nature, an inward quality or feature." Intimacy also refers to the "fundamental, essential, or intrinsic character of a thing."

Miller (1983) says we have “forgotten” how close human beings were to one another. His example of the Medieval bakery is an interesting one and a shock to contemporary sensibilities: The “family,” consisting of the owner, his wife and children, household servants and bakery employees-- all living with virtually no privacy in the small and hot bakery/sales room/house-- represents a particular kind of social contract. The only way to leave, and even that is economically unlikely, is to marry out of the home. Close? Yes, and cloyingly so by contemporary sensibilities. We often hear people speak of being or feeling close to another. *How* close? Is physical proximity and sharing personal functions and activities with another the same as being intimate?

Closeness, according to OED, refers to proximity--in space, time, form or state. Closeness is of "two or more parts or things in local relation: joined without any intervening distance or space, in immediate proximity, very near." The primary notion is that of having intervening space or spaces closed up, or the act of closing those spaces whereby the parts are in immediate contact with, or near to each other. The overall sense of closeness is not necessarily one of depth and innerness, but rather one of external connection, proximity, spatiality. In the verb form, there is a "closing or uniting together, union, junction, an ending of an open state of matters." In most definitions there is a clear sense of enclosing, though the joining, uniting, combining or coalescing could be in a "common centre" or neutral common ground.

On a male reading, we can perhaps see a sense of confinement in some of the definitions of "being close." Men often express feeling "closed in" by someone, or by situation or circumstance, with "no room to breathe." I immediately think of Willie Nelson singing *Don't Fence Me In*. The fences are not only on the mythical range, but in relationships-- or so men often seem to feel. Jack Nicholson’s character in the 1970's film, *Five Easy Pieces*, tells his sister that he has to move on before things that were good go "bad". It is not a happy leaving, not a moving toward, but an escape *from* "something" that he cannot or dare not name; an escape from the threat of impending intimacy. The important point is not the threat per se, but the fact that he cannot *talk about it*. He cannot speak of fear, for to name his fear would be to reveal his very vulnerability in the face of the person(s) he most longs to be intimate with. He can speak of sex and sexual conquest all too openly, but he cannot name what is inside: loving feelings or a longing to be loved. His is a familiar story of father and son alienated from each other. His father can no longer speak, and yet it is clear that his unverbalized opinions still hold power.

I am embarrassed to realize how dated the song and film are. It is interesting to see Nicholson playing a remarkably similar character in the current movie, *As Good as it Gets*. This time around, the female object of his ambivalent feelings is much younger than he is (a Hollywood trend right now). The era now allows, too, a gay male neighbor who becomes a friend or at least a very good neighbor. If he were not gay (safe) and in desperate need of help, we have to wonder if they would become close at all. Nicholson captures important aspects of the male intimacy thing.

I am more touched by the movie, *Good Will Hunting*. It is about fathers and sons, male mentors, healing the "father wound." Will Hunting (Matt Damon) is a brilliant young man who has been grievously injured by the adults in his life, particularly by his abusive father. He finds, or is found by, a soul mate in the person of a counsellor Sean (Robin Williams) who dares to love this "in your face" young rebel. Will cannot/will not know that his problem is one of intimacy. He cannot/will not acknowledge the wall of pain that forms a boundary between himself and the world. It is heartbreaking to see him run from the possibilities of intimacy with Skylar (Minnie Driver). He cannot feel the heartbreaking pain she feels because he must deny the enormity of his own.

Even his male friends know that Will must take some kind of leap into the unknown. The cave he inhabits is ultimately stifling, deadening. Will cannot run forever from the old story of abuse and negation (albeit a story he dares not utter). "It wasn't your fault," Sean keeps saying like a mantra. Will can only begin to hear it when Sean's love is secure. On the surface of it, the problem is a deficiency or lack within the boy's psyche, caused by his father's negation and abuse of him; a father-hunger that cannot be named. The solution is a more positive father-role model who can model a more healthy manhood for him, and a more healthy pattern of relating. The resolution, albeit with the mentoring of a skilled though eccentric counsellor, is not about technological solutions or quick fixes, but about the courage to co-create new stories, and from those, new intimate interactions. Sean is a man, but a man who can acknowledge the feminine (in contrast to his colleague the driven mathematician). In the first instance, Will's success story is about recovery from abuse. But it is fundamentally a gendered recovery, and a discovery of intimacy.

I digress, perhaps. If there are spaces where men ostensibly feel "at home," as the expression goes-- traditionally masculine spaces such as the workplace, the pub, the locker room, the outdoors, the team or club, the coffee shop (or even the therapist's office), do they experience the bonding with other men there as intimate? We hear much of "male bonding," though of late it seems to have become a pejorative term. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985) offers another possible explanation of what she calls the "male-homosocial bond" and questions of distance:

> That what goes on at football games, in fraternities, at the Bohemian Grove, and at climactic moments in war novels can look, with only a slight shift of optic, quite startlingly 'homosexual,' is... the coming to visibility of the normally implicit terms of a coercive double bind.... *For a man to be a man's man is separated only by an invisible, carefully blurred, always-already-crossed line from being 'interested in men'* (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 89)

Neve (1989) follows Sedgwick's view, writing of women and girls as an important *"currency":* "signs flashed from man to man, signs that get used and then discarded" (p. 64). Women help men to blur the already-crossedness of the line. If women are signs and currency between men, they are also invoked as *intimacy brokers* on men's behalf. On this account, men often ascribe a great deal of power and responsibility to women because they see that women can do what they cannot. But to the extent that such power is feared and even loathed as a threat to manhood's often fragile sense of itself, it must at the very same time be contained and discredited. We see this happening in terms of the very institution where it is most evident; in ideologies of *family.*

Messner (1992), in commenting on his study of the meanings of athletic endeavors for men in an ultimately male-homosocial space, shows that in that context there are important elements of hegemony over man's Others. His view is consonant with Sedgwick's:

> It is revealed that through these kinds of athletic friendships and peer group dynamics, heterosexual men marginalize gay men, while policing and limiting any 'feminine' tendencies in themselves. Homophobia discounts the possible existence of erotic desire among men, while aggressive sexuality expressed toward women displaces the erotic bond among men toward a devalued female object. As a result, the bond among males is cemented, while the ability to develop egalitarian relationships with either males or females is impoverished.... [But] men do not equally share the fruits of this privilege. What we observe in sport is the construction of a *dominant form* of masculinity-- what Connell (1987) calls 'hegemonic masculinity.' [emphasis author's](pp. 232-233)

Sedgwick and Neve and Messner, do not say that the much celebrated male to male "bond" is never about intimacy, but they do problematize it and question the Otherness that sustains it. This view does not bode well for intimacy; neither for men who must always be vigilant about keeping the line blurred, nor for women as the Other who is appropriated as currency. Sexuality assumes a central importance here, whether it is sexual desire denied or sexuality as currency. If the question of proper distance between men and women becomes, on these accounts, problematic; the distance between men is a crisis always barely apprehended. The story of the two porcupines is representative. There are moments in history, and Montaigne's friendship with La Boétie *may*, on Montaigne's retrospective account of it, be one among them, when men seem less concerned to maintain such distance. When it suits hegemonic interests, however, the line must be maintained.

What particular meanings are *territory* and space apt to have for men? Territoriality, in the sovereign sense represented by the two bucks fighting for the doe in the wild, is iconic for men. If it is felt as a problematic, it is perhaps only so for the one vanquished. Intimacy happens most often in a place, as in for example a shared space such as a home, or in relation to a place or places that have meanings for both persons. The notion of *shared* spaces for the in-between of intimacy is apt to be very problematic for men. We have come to think of the home, in both physical and emotional senses, as a literal haven and a site of intimacy. Comfort and security of place are preconditions for intimate relation. A sense of freedom to move in and out is also critical.

But of course intimate space is about more than a physical place, for space is also discursively-constructed and gendered. To the extent that it could be said that the home has become a feminized space, do men feel free to express themselves there in ways that are apt to lead to intimacy? If men often seem to see the home as a space where they will be looked after and nurtured without demand for reciprocity, will they experience the responsibility and response-ability of real intimacy there? What shape will such intimacy take if men still hew to the notion of manhood as the "not feminine," and the notion of woman as natural nurturer? Are nurturance and intimacy ever the same thing-- nurturance may well represent one pole of a certain complementarity in relationships, but can it ever be about equality?

If relations within the feminized space of "home" are problematic, perhaps that is not the only important question. If men seem to seek intimacy more and more within the context of family and home, we must wonder what this says about their relationships with men outside the home-- what are the consequences for men of looking to the home, that is to women and children, as the sole sources of intimacy in their lives?. This will seem a huge turnaround on my part since I already paint all of men's relationships with such a problematic and encompassing brush. I am not suggesting that men's relationships within the family are suddenly unproblematic; rather that we should wonder about the consequences of putting everything in one relationship basket.

Intimacy Unspoken

> Wanting to say things / I miss my father tonight / His voice, the slight catch / The depth from his thin chest / The tremble of emotion / in something he has just said / to his son, his song.
> We planted corn one spring at Acu / we planted several times / but this one particular time / I remember the soft damp sand / in my hand.
> My father had stopped at one point / to show me an overturned furrow; / the plowshare had unearthed / the burrow nest of a mouse / in the soft moist sand.
> Very gently, he scooped tiny pink animals / into the palm of his hand / and told me to touch them./ We took them to the edge / of the field and put them in the shade / of a sand moist clod.
> *I remember the very softness / of cool and warm sand and tiny alive mice / and my father saying things.* (Ortiz, *My Father's Song*, in Sullivan, 1995)

The father in Ortiz' moving poem "says things," but in an important sense perhaps he need not do so-- it is significant that in recreating the moment Ortiz reports the event and even the tone, but feels no need to report the words. Does intimate relation have to be *expressed*, and expressible, verbally? While much contemporary discourse about intimate relation--particularly between men and women--focuses on verbal communication and communication technologies; surely intimacy is also about the unstated and even the ineffable, the nuance, the glance. The powerful gesture to save "tiny alive mice." Sometimes even to name the moment is to violate it.

Messner (1992), again writing in the context of male athletes' relationships, says that intimacy between male athletes is often covert. The same is apt to be true in many settings where men gather, whether in work or in play. I can relate particularly to the construction jobsite where a whole complex of covert intimacies is obscured by instrumental talk, humor, and shared tasks:

> My research suggests that male athletes do tend to develop what Swain (1989, p. 72) calls 'covert intimacy,' a 'private, often non-verbal context-specific form of communication.'

> Whereas women's style of intimacy emphasizes the importance of talk, in men's covert intimacy, 'closeness is in the doing,' and 'actions speak louder than words and carry greater interpersonal value.' (p. 223).

Men are often heard to complain that the women in their lives always want to talk about "relationship stuff," while their man to man and perhaps even father to child relations may be experienced more implicitly and more non-verbally. This expectation is perhaps feared by men in some sense at the same time, either because of its emotionally-laden nature or perhaps because of some sense of inadequacy to respond appropriately. "Why can't women just accept us the way we are," men might plaintively ask.

Silences, though, are not all created equal, and they cannot be separated from the elements, hegemonic or not, of their construction. How might we distinguish the life-affirming quietude of a sacred moment or even of the "covert intimacy" Messner addresses--from the tense silence of conflict and negation, the political struggle to deny what needs to be named, or even the silences of self pity or fear?

Wittgenstein alerts us to another kind of silence: "Whereof we cannot speak, therof we must be silent (cited in Rutherford, 1992, p. 1). What of the ineffable silence of the not yet knowable; the silence for which words cannot be found because those words do not, perhaps, yet exist for men; the silence of words that do not yet belong to a space? How do men begin to open spaces in the history and myths that are Western Man for a language of intimacy? What is it that struggles to come to voice? Can men "know" what cannot be said if the very injunction against saying is embedded in the dominant discourse and tradition? The risk seems great indeed.

In my Introduction, I mention a friend's irritation with me for politicizing his bicycle ride with a male friend. Can intimacy be found in simply doing something with a friend-- without necessarily speaking to one another? Can there can be a certain intimacy in the sharing of a task, in interdependence and the mutual respect for skills and commitment? Can intimacy ever be a matter of instrumental calculation, a reciprocity of instrumental *quid pro quo*? Can it be intimacy if it *cannot* be brought to language? Such questions are questions for men, and they perhaps bring us closer to the crux of this project... Meanwhile, I cannot get Ortiz' poem out of my mind.

Intimacy Absent

Drawing from his empirical studies, McAdams (1989) enumerates some of the differences in the meanings intimacy seems to have for men and women. It is worth considering his account at some length at this point because it is so representative of contemporary discourses about the *absence* in men's relationships:

- The proud bearer of the phallus, *he* seeks to create a world that soars straight and powerful into the sky. He strives to reach the top of that world, to attain the pinnacle of the hierarchy, to relate to the other from above as he gazes down on the layers below. But he cannot be heard from the lofty perch, and he cannot hear what happens. (p. 165)

- In the terms of David Bakan, men are agentic; women are communal. Bakan writes, 'agency manifests itself in isolation, alienation, and aloneness; communion in contact, openness, and union.' (p. 166)

- McGill concludes that men approach virtually all meaningful human relationships in extraordinarily nonintimate ways.... [Men] gauge the quality of intimacy in their love lives by the quality of sex. When it comes to 'being there' for children, many so-called 'family men' are, in McGill's words, 'phantom men': they are just not there. (pp. 167-168)

- Women show higher levels of self-disclosure than men. They express more feelings for longer periods of time than men. (p. 172)

- Men's friendships appear to be less intimate than women's.... Men may compete with each other so much that they are generally unable to regard each other as equals with whom it is appropriate to share.... Men may fear seeming vulnerable in the eyes of their peers.... Men may fear that being intimate with others [men] will be viewed as a sign of homosexuality.... Men are exposed to very few role models. (p. 172)

- When women complain about their love relationships, they are likely to cite the absence of intimacy in the relationship. Men are more likely to complain about the loss of romance or passion. (p. 173)

- Women score higher in intimacy motivation than men. (p. 174)

- As Chodorow and Gilligan maintain, men do not define themselves in terms of relationships. Rather they define themselves *on top of* relationships. The man's identity rests on a secure base of interpersonal relations. (p. 192)

What is the test of intimacy? If intimacy is indeed a discursive, social, and political construction, can we ever be free as individual subjects to make it whatever we want to make it? If men say they are intimate with each other or with women, must we accept their statements as the last word? They may say they are because the dominant view says we must be intimate with someone, else there must be something wrong with us. They may say they are for many other equally compelling reasons. But no, we are not "intimate" just because we say we are. Inness (1992) suggests several tests to apply to such questions:

> First, the personal point of view is [itself] a social construct and hence, will usually reflect the dominant social understanding of intimacy. Second, the agent faces a burden of proof to establish intimacy claims. Third, the primacy of the personal point of view does not undermine the possibility that the agent's self-knowledge with respect to [their] emotions might be fallible. Fourth, since the attitudes of love, liking, and care are directed toward the development of affiliations with others, such as friendship, we can always criticize a person's claims about such states by contending that [their] actions do not support these affiliations. (p. 87)

Synopsis

When we tote up the evidence, the picture is not a positive or encouraging one for men. That is not to say, of course, that there are not a good many men who are satisfied with their relationships, or a good many women who are not. It is to say, though, that there is evidence to suggest some serious problematics in men's relationships and ways of relating. *Intimacy* emerges as a potentially useful concept and discourse. . What, then, are we to define it?

- Is intimacy what we commonly believe it to be? How is intimacy experienced/desired by men in daily life? Does a sense of its structures begin to emerge?

- Where is intimacy found in the structures and ideologies of *man and manhood*? What are the particular connections between masculinity and intimacy?

- Do persons have a capacity for intimacy? How would such a capacity grow or develop? Do certain sorts of life events have particular significance for intimacy, either currently or retrospectively?

- Does intimacy inhere in the Self, the Other, or some in-between? How do we understand the Self that can "be" intimate with Other? Can we say we are "intimate with ourselves"? If so, is this a precondition for intimacy with Other?

- Can intimacy ever be described as some essence of relatedness, or is it played out in diverse forms in daily life?

- Where do we locate the feminine in constructions of intimacy?

- If intimacy is problematic for men, is it particularly so for older generations-- are younger men more ready and able to open up the conversation? Is intimacy a culture-bound concept?

- Is intimacy a concept constructed to order social relations, a fundamentally political project? If intimacy has political dimensions, what are the intersections of the personal/individual, social/cultural and political-- as seen through the lens of gender and as experienced by men? What are the elements of agency and power as men define them?

- What are the particular meanings and forms of intimacy in a time described as postmodern, global, technological-instrumental?

- What are the languages and spaces of intimacy?

These are some of the questions that will guide my exploration. I hope my reader would agree at this point that the research question begins to take on a form and poignance. It seems that an exploration of manhood's constructions will be called for before I can return to a further consideration of *intimacy*. But first I must address some questions of *methodology*.

Chapter Four

WHY ESSAY?

Introduction: A Reluctant Methodology

> Descartes ushered in the modern age by establishing the primacy of method, in the course of which he fixed the distinction between subject and object as sharply as could possibly be done" (Barrett, 1979, p. 26).

> If I want to give my mind diversion, then it is not honor I seek, but freedom. (citing Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, in Chapman, 1990, p. 137)

> The body has a great part in our being, it holds a high rank in it; so its structure and composition are well worth considering. Those who want to split up our two principal parts and sequester them from each other are wrong. On the contrary, we must couple and join them together again. We must order the soul not to draw aside and entertain itself apart, not to scorn and abandon the body (nor can it do so except by some counterfeit monkey trick), but to rally the body, embrace it, cherish it, assist it, control it, advise it, set it right and bring it back when it goes astray; *in short to marry it and be a husband to it*, so that their actions may appear not different and contrary, but harmonious and uniform. (Montaigne, 1958, II:17, pp. 484-485)

Man is in crisis as he finds himself pushed to loosen the bonds and unpack the legacy of method and certainty. I am struck anew, as I re-read Hillary Lawson's (1985) *Reflexivity: The Post-modern Predicament*, with the seemingly insoluble dilemmas of legitimation and knowing in our time. For man, certainty has long been represented in rationality, control, and instrumental knowing; all masquerading as neutrality. Lawson is not encouraging when he says: "Our 'certainties' are expressed through texts, through language, through sign systems, which no longer seem to be neutral.... There can be no arena of certainty" (p.10). Kenneth Gergen (1991) extends Lawson's notions, arguing that we are in an era of the "saturated self." The loss of certainty in post-modern thought and in "real" life is a thinker's struggle, it is my struggle, and it is perhaps Everyman's struggle. Apropos of the task at hand, it is also a methodological dilemma.

If man's emotional life is subjugated by cultural ideologies dominant in a particular time, then to understand such life demands method that is not so deeply implicated in the very subjugation. If what we need to understand is that which has been subjugated by method, what method will be adequate to its study? What method can I call upon to open spaces in its/my own hegemony; spaces from which to be critical and to move beyond? I am reminded of the boast Archimedes makes that he can move the world if someone will give him a lever long enough, a fulcrum, a platform to stand upon, and, of course, enough distance to make the lever work. How will I deal with this seemingly enormous and contradictory challenge? Where will I find lever, fulcrum, platform, space? *No one can stand outside the world.*

I invoke the thought of Descartes, Rembrandt, and Montaigne to draw a parallel between the historical ideologies of Science and Method, and man's subjectivity and struggles to define himself and "his" world. Descartes the mathematician/philosopher is remarkably prescient in laying out the icons that will come to guide Modern man's being. These icons are, among other things, about *method.* Man not only subjugates "his" world to a "certain" way of thinking; he subjugates his own corporeal being and the very openings for closer relation to others to a hegemonic rationality. He separates himself from the world and he seeks freedom from restraint and convention. In the Cartesian research canon, we are enjoined to measure and objectify.

My reader may wish, at this point, to accuse me of creating a straw man to rail away at. Surely, they will say, no one believes the Cartesian good-bad stuff any more. My reader will wonder why I choose to recreate in such simplistic form--caricature even--the dualisms that have for so long dominated men's being. These are fair questions, perhaps. It is true, I confess that I do create a straw man. His given name would be Positivism, and his middle name would be Progress; but he is known by many others, being a master of disguise and subterfuge. He often appears still in iconic trace as Marlborough Man (though even he has fallen on hard times). The straw man may be enfeebled, but he is not quite ready to blow away. He may be provisionally relegated to a remote place in the garden, serving as scarecrow; and he may no longer have such an awesome and monolithic exterior presence--but he still has a spine of the strongest steel.

What I am after, then, is more than mere research tools that promise some dispassionate, objectively descriptive and measurable view of *men and intimacy.* What is called for as *methodology* is a sense of journey; as well as a meaning and purpose for the journey, a way of being. Van Manen (1989), advocates and delineates such a view:

> *Methodology* refers to the philosophical framework, the fundamental assumptions and characteristics of a human science perspective. It includes the general orientation to life, the view of knowledge, and the sense of what it means to be human which is associated with or implied by a certain research method. We might say that the methodology is the theory behind the method, including the study of what method one should follow and why. The Greek *hodos* means `way.' And method-ology means the logos... of the method... So methodology means `pursuit of knowledge.' And a certain mode of inquiry is implied in the notion 'method'--the theory behind the method. (p. 27)

I have up to now linked "method" to a Cartesian view that values doing, distance and control. How can I now bring a richer meaning to this important concept? It takes a particularly *human science oriented methodology* (a broad and encompassing notion) to study the meaning dimensions of the lifeworld. This study is about the ways men construct themselves, and in particular, the ways they construct themselves as social beings. It is a study of *geistig*-- "a matter of the depth of the soul, spirit, embodied knowing and being" (p. 14). I am concerned with man's soul, but with an embodied rather than a transcendent notion of it.

I am captivated by the story of the Dutch phenomenologist, Langeveld, "reluctantly" adding a chapter on methodology to his book on human science (cited in Van Manen, 1989). My reader will not be surprised by now to hear that I, too, am "reluctant" in that I want to claim some meta-methodic low ground. I have cast the preoccupation with the discourses of hegemonic Method, and of the primacy for men of the instrumental, of Doing over Being, in unmistakably dogmatic fashion as central problematics in men's lives. My desire to make such claims is, I must acknowledge, quite clearly no more pure nor less dualistic than the view it wishes to subvert. I see my creation, the Straw Man, out of the corner of my eye: languishing in the garden, urging me to distance myself as researcher from this phenomenon I wish to study, urging me to distance myself from men as they seem to distance from "their" Others.

If his urging could be seen as a reflection of Cartesian Modernity's canonical quest for the external and the certain, human science perhaps takes a more Montaignean turn toward the inner and contingent. To understand intimacy is most surely to be situated in-the-middle. If I am indeed in-the-middle, I hope and claim that it is not from the secure and totalizing position of the *Panopticon*. It is rather more like struggling in the sticky muck of real life as a man, but also struggling in a scholarly and reflective way. Have I, I ask my reader, begun to loosen the grip? If not, it will be impossible for the goodness and potential of manhood to show itself through the haze of its problematic aspects in this study.

An Intimate Methodology

What are the particular requirements and specifications for methodology that I must address in this essay? What would constitute an intimate methodology and a methodology of intimacy?

- Methodology must obviously first and always enable me to bring a deeper understanding of men's dilemmas in relation from the inside, from their perspective, and in their words. It must strengthen my ability to be present in the fullest possible sense to men who struggle to understand themselves and to be understood; to be attuned to their joys and hurts; to be attentive to the spaces in their speech, the unutterable, the subjugated. It must be a methodology of care, but also one that allows space for reflection. It must be about a journey in and out of men's narratives and icons.

- Methodology must at the same time allow me voice and place for my own ideas and experiences, passions, vulnerabilities, and questions; a place for me as the research instrument. It must allow me to develop an intimacy with my reader.

- It must be a methodology that allows space for a rigorous and yet "passionate scholarship" (Dubois, in Lather, 1991, p. 62); an antidote for the injunctions contained in the ideologies that have guided/subjugated men's lives. It must meet the truth tests of scholarship and of "good sense;" these factions that have too rarely talked to each other.

- Methodology must help me to create a text that is both aesthetic and meaningful; not a text that merely and dispassionately reports research findings, but a text that invites conversation with my reader, a text that invites new and "better" interpretations of life, a text that opens rather than forecloses on possibilities.

- Even as it honors men and their stories, it must be a methodology that evokes respect for all those that man traditionally casts as Other; a commitment to breaking the hegemonies that subjugate each of us, albeit in different ways. It should, in particular, point to changes in educational and social work practices that hold possibilities for liberation.

- It becomes clear that methodology must find ways to narrate, to bring the subjugated to language. The bonds of received language must be loosened. Methodology must help men to create new and yet manly languages.

- If method is a journey toward understanding, then it must be a journey of courage and a journey to the core of power and politics. It may be a fierce and a partisan one at times, for the traditional accounts of things will always have already staked a claim to their own primacy.

- Methodology must find a *rapprochement* between the essentialist position--the unities in men's experience--and the uniqueness of each man's experience.

- Above all, perhaps, it must be a methodology of relentless reflexivity.

What could be more useful, then, than to *essay* about men, about men's essays, through men's essays? The essay as *methodology*--both as method and theory behind the method--is not usually thought of in reference to the human science tradition or any research tradition. But why not? To "essay" is in every sense also "to journey." My reader will be less than surprised by this point to learn that I intend to employ the *essay and essaying* in the Montaignean tradition as methodology. What would this essay/method look like?

Toward Defining Essay

> In essaying, Montaigne discovered a literary instrument for turning common sense into good sense. *The essay is, then, an experiment in the community of truth, and not a packaging of knowledge ruled by definitions and operations.* The essay is a political instrument inasmuch as it liberates the writer and reader from the domination of conventional standards of clarity and communication. The essay is a basic expression of literary initiative, authority, style and gratuity accomplished against the limits of received

> language. It exercises the reader and the writer in the practice of the antimony of speech (*la parole*) and language (*la langue)*, making sense together somewhere between communism and solipsism. *The essay is not a literary technique; that would make it an instrument of the dominant culture of ready communication*. (O'Neill, 1982, p. 9)

Surely this is an extravagant claim, this view of the essay as an unruly literary instrument that is not technique, this expression of resistance to the limits of language and politics? Is the essay, then, a genre, or a confluence of genres, or an anti-genre? The essay can be all of these, for it not only resists categorizing, but it also contains its own critique. The essay resists clear definition. To a great extent the essay defines itself by what it is not, by what it opposes. The essayist mines and assays the whole of human history in a quest for useful truths--then constantly puts *those* truths to question, and even the questioning to question. The good essay could be described as a reflexive spiral, constantly and relentlessly critiquing itself and then its own critique.

To essay is "to weigh, measure, examine" (OED). It is also related to the notion of assaying, "to test the worth of an ore." Samuel Johnson, essaying a century after Montaigne, defines the essay as "A loose sally of the mind, an irregular indigested piece, not a regular and orderly composition." Such a view does not, perhaps, inspire confidence in its scholarity. I would prefer to leave fine distinctions of genre definition to literary theorists, simply referring to my own personal essay as "essay." I owe it to my reader to acknowledge that I shamelessly conflate the traditions and many essay sub-genres to construct my own essay. Such borrowings and meanderings are the essence of essaying. Though I am more interested in essay as method and as experiment in truth-making than in literary genre *per se,* literariness is central to the essay's power and worth, so that matter cannot be disposed of quite so readily. I will have more to say about that presently, but first: what does the essay look like? How will we know if we meet one in the genre market?

What a Personal Essay Looks Like

I look to Lopate's (1994) Introduction to his *Art of the Personal Essay* as a beginning point in describing the particular essay form I will apply to this project. His is a masterful introduction, almost a personal essay unto itself although he curiously chooses not to explicate his own essaying process. He shares my fascination and respect for Montaigne's invention. What particular elements, then, distinguish the personal essay in his view:

- At the core of the personal essay is the supposition that there is a certain unity to human experience. As Michel de Montaigne, the great innovator and patron saint of personal essayists, put it, `Every man has within himself the entire human condition.' (p. xxiii).

Despite my earlier critique of essentialism, there is no escape from it. I see such "certain unity" in men's experience as a thematic and narrative unity; what I would describe as a unity of cultural story. If we cannot see some such unities in human experience-- whether we see them as based in nature or culture-- there would after all be no point or common ground in the essay nor in any discourse nor in life itself.

- Personal essayists converse with the reader because they are already having dialogues and disputes with themselves. Montaigne may not have been, as he claimed, the first writer to take himself as his subject, but he was perhaps the first to talk to himself convincingly on the page. Reading him, we seem to be eavesdropping on a mind in solitude. (p.xxiv)

The essay is conversational in tone and form. But essayists converse with themselves, and then with the reader, for a reason: the essay reflects an agenda. It is more than an attempt to convince the reader of the writer's point of view, though that may be the route toward the agenda. No matter what the apparent topic, the essayist's underlying aim is to create a community; to draw people into a consideration of how we do and how we might live together.

- The struggle for honesty is central to the ethos of the personal essay.... If the essayist can delve further underneath, until we feel the topic has been handled as honestly, as *fairly* as possible, then at least one essential condition of a successful personal essay has been met.... Part of our trust in good personal essayists issues, paradoxically, from their exposure of their own betrayals, uncertainties, and self-mistrust.... We learn the rhythm by which the essayist receives, digests, and spits out the world, and we learn the shape of his or her privacy. (pp. xxv-xxvii)

The journey is rarely a linear one. We come to expect the essayist to reveal *things* about themselves--they are, after all, the center of the essay--but we also come to expect a certain transparency, fairness and integrity, and awareness of their encapsulation in their time as they choose what to reveal and withhold.

- Just as the personal essayist is able to make the small loom large, so he or she simultaneously contracts and expands the self.... [His aim is] to make his many partial selves dance to the same beat-- to unite, through force of voice and style, those discordant,

> fragmentary personae so that the reader can accept them as issuing from one coherent self.... The harvesting of self-contradiction is an intrinsic part of the personal essay form. (pp. xxviii-xxix).

Men are apt to insist that their-selves cohere in certain and objective ways, and to deny the contradictions that dwell within. The essayist seldom accedes to such a view. The essay is composed of fragments of the writer's self and of the world "he" inhabits. They are never *mere* fragments, however, but important shards that the essayist and reader will use to reconstruct life's more grand themes.

- The essayist is someone who lives with the guilty knowledge that he is `prejudiced'... and has a strong predisposition for or against certain everyday phenomena. It then becomes his business to attend to these inner signals, these stomach growls, these seemingly indefensible intuitions, and try to analyse what lies underneath them, the better to judge them. (p. xxxi)

The essayist is often contrary. Essaying is often ornery writing, bad-tempered writing; not merely for the sake of it (we hope), but to open up life's contradictions and thicken them a bit. The essayist does not expect to be taken literally at all times.

- All [personal essayists] have occasionally had to wrestle with what might be called the stench of ego. A person can write about himself from angles that are charmed, fond, delightfully nervy; alter the lens just a little and he crosses over into gloating, pettiness, defensiveness, score settling... or whining about his victimization. The trick is to realize that one is not important, except insofar as one's example can serve to elucidate a more widespread human trait and make readers feel a little less lonely and freakish. (p. xxii)

The "stench of ego" can be ripe indeed. But the good essay rewards its reader, in time, with the sweet smell of insight and deepened appreciation for the human condition. The essayist's life is center, even the standard by which all else is weighed and considered; but never the sole purpose nor justification for the essay.

- Closely allied to these seesaws of modesty and egotism, universality and touchy eccentricity, is the penchant of the personal essayist for outbreaks of mischievous impudence.... Such cool impertinence often takes the form of a self-reflexive moment, which punctures the argument by drawing attention to the stage machinery of essayistic discourse.(p. xxxii-xxxiii)

The "idler figure" invented by Samuel Johnson is a masterpiece: the essayist disengages himself from some of the demands of real life to be a dabbler and an observer of the irony, contradiction and even silliness that is the human condition. Escape is ultimately impossible, of course, but it is amusing and useful nonetheless to toy with such a prospect. The dabbling serves as a useful challenge, like a yappy sheep dog nipping at our heels. The good essayist is humble, even when thumbing their nose at the tradition; ultimately respectful of life's sacredness if not always of its absurdities.

- 'I am more inclined to apologize for writing about great events, which touched me not at all, than for tracing again the tiny snail track which I made myself.' This 'snail track' might be the insignia of the personal essay genre: (citing Hubert Butler, p. xxxvi).

As will be all too apparent to my reader by now, I struggle constantly with the tension between man's epic His-story--THE HEGEMONIC SUPER-HIGHWAY--and *the snail track*. The snail tracks of men's lives meander and often disappear altogether, denied voice and even word; we have to search diligently indeed if we are to pick them up again. The essay is at once an account of History and of the little events of daily life.

- 'The essay is the enactment of a process by which the soul realizes itself even as it is passing from day to day and from moment to moment.... In the final analysis, the personal essay represents a mode of being. (citing Hardison, p. xliv)

Hardison is most likely thinking in the first instance of the essayist's "soul." The essayist models and advocates a way of living and a stance toward life that is continually reflexive--and then reflexive about the reflexivity. But the more important point is that the soul of the reader also comes to realize itself through good essaying.

- To essay is to attempt, to test, to make a run at something without knowing whether you are going to succeed. (p. xlii)

There is always method in the apparent madness of the essay. The "attempt" certainly reflects a particular attitude and openness on the essayist's part. But it does represent at the same time a method, often in the guise of anti-method; a way of securing the reader's assent to the essayist's point.

Lopate shows how the essayist uses any literary technique that will engage the reader and add to the liveliness of the proceeding *toward their serious point*: example, list, simile, hyperbole, digression, the movement from individual to universal and back again. It may seem by now that the essayist, at least the personal essayist, can do anything he or she wishes. It may seem, too, that the reader is a passive recipient of the essayist's self-indulgences. How, then, am I to turn this genre into a respectable research methodology?

Unmethodically Methodical / Methodically Unmethodical

> Essays smile. The skin around the eyes crinkles (a sign of age?); the eyes, soft and warm (probably brown), may not dance, though they can twinkle. And the smile appears genuine; the face makes you feel comfortable. It offers recognition, and *you feel positively invited to respond.* (Atkins, 1992, p. 33)

At first glance, Atkins' view of the essay seems the very antithesis of method. But wait, what is this "response" of the reader all about? Does he intend that we will respond only to the aesthetic in the essay, to the essay's value as entertainment or diversion? No, even Atkins' playful essay intends to engage us in a serious project. It is playfully methodical. The essay has always been methodical at its core (Montaigne's penchant for revisions on revisions is legendary, perhaps betraying not only a perfectionism but a concern for his serious project). Pater, writing in 1893, may be the first to alert us to the methodical possibilities in the Montaignean essay form: "The method of both genres [dialogue and essay] is, for its genuine practitioners, 'co-extensive with life itself.... There will always be much of accident in this essentially informal, this un-methodical, method'" (citied in Kauffmann, 1989, p. 221).

Adorno (1974) says "The experience is mediated through the essay's own conceptual organization; the essay proceeds, so to speak, *methodically unmethodically*" (p. 13). His own essaying, despite his apparent admiration for Montaigne's style, is rigorously analytical and dialectical. I find it surprising that he takes notice of the essay form at all, but he obviously sees great subversive potential in it for furthering his critical agenda:

> *In the realm of thought it is virtually the essay alone that has successfully raised doubts about the absolute privilege of method.* The essay allows for the consciousness of nonidentity, without expressing it directly; it is radical in its non-radicalism, in refraining from any reduction to a principle, in its accentuation of the partial against the total, in its fragmentary character.... The essay refuses to be intimidated by the depraved profundity according to which truth and history are incompatible and opposed to one another....

> *Merely individual experience, which consciousness takes as its point of departure, since it is what is closest to it, is itself mediated by the overarching experience of historical humankind.* (pp. 9-10)

What diverse visions of the essay do Pater, Atkins, and Adorno create! But all are concerned, as Montaigne is and essayists ever since are (whether they say so explicitly or not) with creating a better world. They would undoubtedly agree on another critically important feature of the essay: that its strength and value as genre lies precisely in its *lack* of allegiance to any one style. Adorno says in his conclusion "The essay's innermost formal law is heresy" (p. 23). It is not so much that the essay is not methodical or that it has a merely solipsistic or iconoclastic structure. Every essayist *essaies* to create their own unique structure from the models history and culture make available. Every essayist is apt to have a different consciousness and starting point: starting methodically as Adorno does, or starting unmethodically as Atkins seems to do (or would have us perhaps believe he is doing). No, this matter of method is not about style alone. Adorno, says, ambitiously, that it is the essay alone among genres that decenters the canons of method. At least it methodically *essaies* to subvert method, including its own. It is methodically (intentionally and unmistakably) unmethodical.

All method makes a truth claim about the *conditio humana* (Friedrich, 1991, p. 93), but the essay's particular truth claim is more apt to be about the fragmentary nature of life, about discontinuity and dispersion, and about possibility. "Discontinuity is essential to the essay; its concern is always an arrested conflict" (citing Adorno, in Kauffmann, 1989, p. 230). Kauffmann shows how Adorno's anti-methodical method inevitably itself becomes Method: "the essay is subtly reinstrumentalized in its very critique of instrumentalization" (p. 232). We should not take it from this that Adorno's project fails, or that Montaigne's, or any other, succeeds unproblematically. On the contrary, Kauffmann's observation is the strongest possible affirmation of the essay's contingent nature: *The essay must never cease in its self-critique.* But still, it will never escape essentialism.

Who is the Father

One way that we might seek to define the essay is in terms of its paternity (Men have long been troubled by the uncertainties of paternity--DNA testing changes all that). Haefner's (1989) account of the "fathering" theory is an elegant statement that captures much, not only of the essay genre, but of the dilemmas of hegemonic manhood:

> Two `branches' or `offspring' from the essay's two fathers were identified and canonized: the Montaignean and the Baconian essay. Like infinite mirror images, a host of signifiers elaborated each sub-species of the essay. The Montaignean essay was personal, solipsistic, associational, reflective, anecdotal, unorganized, spontaneous, and meditative; the Baconian essay was objective, impersonal, concerned with great social and moral issues, rational, authoritative, methodical, balanced and argumentive.... Dichotomy controls the descriptors, and *essentially this is male ritualistic combat figured out in a theory of literary form*, two diametric personalities in conflict. (p. 260)

If "method" is about the engendering the essay, can it be understood without considering its gendering of the essay? In Montaigne's time such a question cannot be asked. Today it cannot not be asked. Is it true, as Joeres and Mittman (1993) compellingly argue, that the essay is steeped in a masculine tradition? In examining this important question, I begin with a couple of Atkins' (1992) picturesque metaphors:

- The essay sleeps around, has impregnated some of its neighbors, is even rumored to have begotten several offspring-- all of them out of wedlock because the essay refuses to be pinned down, to be married to any one style, treatment, or subject matter. (p. 8)

- Essay writing is certainly irregular and poorly paying work; in a number of ways the form seems (to me at least) feminine, and writing it resembles the piecing together of rags and remnants from hither and yon, discarded, thought to be no longer of any use.... The essayist plunders texts-- like a quilter rummaging around in a treasured bag of remnants, scraps left over or cut from other serviceable items... the fabrics in which we live our daily lives. (pp. 20-21)

Atkins' essay about essay evokes many feminine images; images that, he suggests, shape essay as a feminine form. It could be seen as a form that works to retrieve and re-value the fragments of life spurned by other genres, uniting them and finding a home for them in a coherent whole in order to give them renewed meaning. He pursues the link of essay to "nature"--very mindful, we may be sure, of the implications of linking Woman to Nature to Otherness. His metaphors are interesting ones indeed, and it is tempting to take them as a refutation of Joeres' and Mittman's argument. In the end, though, I read Atkins' essay as a thoroughly manly one. His evocation and celebration (or at least indulgence) of images of the philandering male--he who "refuses to be pinned down"--is but a more obvious and perhaps trite instance in support of my point. The essay form has long been identified with men's interests, exemplified by Montaigne's middle-age retreat from public life to his "tower." The privilege and affluence that allows such a man the possibility and luxury of distancing from the mundane demands of daily life to write also *authorizes* him to write and be read. He is also apt to be freed from making his own supper.

Hesse (1989) frames the same issues in a rather different and very useful way, referring to the elements of "vertical thesis" and "horizontal story" in the essay (p. 216). It could be the genius of the essay form, at its best, to help its writer and reader find *rapprochement* between the verticality of global structures (traditionally identified with the masculine) and the horizontality of local detail and life in its particularities (traditionally identified with the feminine)? However, if the author is creator and center of the essay, it is more often than not as its *father, not its mother*. "He" may even write with great sensitivity of littleness, of life's fragments, of the horizontal; and he may make great effort, as Montaigne does, to show that such matters are the essence of life; but in the end the essay is apt to be unified and authorized by its verticality. This essay is itself perhaps an apt example, despite any attempts or claims on my part to make it otherwise.

"The essay is seen as having a purifying function, as that which extrapolates meaning and form from something far messier, the chaos of experience.... *Form thus becomes a controlling, clarifying element*" (Joeres & Mittman, 1993, p. 13). Form is the Word, the patriarchal element. But if such a Word "controls and clarifies," it does not so easily dispose of the Otherness of the horizontal. Verticality and horizontality exist--in essay as in life--in form and shadow, shifting places from moment to moment. It is the horizontal, perhaps, that represents "intimacy." This matter of the horizontal of the essay, in particular as it can be identified with feminine tradition, deserves at least one further note:

> One quickly gains the sense that whereas essayists, the actors and agents, are almost always defined very clearly as 'masculine,' the essay itself is placed over and over again into a space that is *uncannily feminine*, at least as the qualities adhering to the 'feminine' have been defined since the eighteenth century. (Joeres & Mittman, 1993, p. 19)

Haefner's "dichotomy" between the Baconian and Montaignean essay traditions does not sound like the sort of one I would want to emulate in trying to expose issues of men-in-relation; issues that, as I have already so declaratively shown, are already deeply embedded in dualities and instrumental thinking. No, "male ritualistic combat" hardly seems the right metaphor; but writing as a Modern man, I can never escape such quintessential metaphors for men's dilemmas in relation. The "masculine" and "feminine," as represented in the vertical and horizontal elements of the essay, will continue to exist in dialectical relation, if not "ritualistic combat," in this essay as in our culture and time. If the essay has always exemplified aspects of a feminine space, it is alternately a subjugated space and a borrowed and appropriated space (a space reminiscent of that occupied by pro-feminist men); a space shifted around and redefined and often turned by men to their advantage (or seemingly so).

For all the talk of ritual combat and the writing of privileged males, perhaps there is hope in the very point that the essay so often *does* inhabit a feminine space. Perhaps the essay *always* tries to appropriate the feminine. Could Woman, that which Man is at such pains to deny, be useful in exposing some of the invisible or shadow side (dare I say lack) of masculinity? The essay, whether the author intends it so or not, creates an Other to the author's subjectivity. The author desires/wishes (it) to be whole, but is continually thwarted by the Law, and so is often disappointed. If the essay's roots in the privilege of manhood and even particular manhoods of privilege are a serious flaw, perhaps the flaw is a fatal one only if not resisted: "the essay both presents and critiques referentiality" (Haefner, 1989, p. 266). In that sense, the essay always writes an Other of subverted power. If the essay is indeed a masculine genre, it still has great potential to subvert that very fact.

Authoring / Authorizing the Essay

Who is the self who writes? Montaigne (1958) says, "I expose myself entire: my portrait is a cadaver on which the veins, the muscles, and the tendons appear at a glance, each part in its place. One part of what I am was produced by a cough, another by a pallor or a palpitation of the heart--in any case dubiously" He goes on to claim, it seems, that the whole self can be written: It is not my deeds I write down; it is myself, it is my essence" (II:7, p. 274). But can we ever write our essence, or anyone's? O'Neill (1982) would suggest not so much that we could not do so, but that there is no stable or sovereign self (a self with no debts) to write:

> We might speak of Rembrandt's discovery of interpictuality, of the movement from portrait to portrait, that parallels Montaigne's discovery of the intertextuality of essaying. In both cases, there is a profundity of borrowings, copyings, and plagiarism that are

> shocking to the originality of the substantial self, but absolutely true to the world's metamorphosis, and to the daily debts of our living.... The self can therefore only consist of a daily improvisation. (O'Neill, 1982, pp.179-180)

If the self writing itself has debts to intertextuality, to culture and history, we must ask by what *author*-ity an author/essayist presumes to write:

> The essaying self is much attenuated. One can no longer seriously pretend that the essay (or anything else) expresses 'the individual's wholly undetermined and freely discovered point of view' (Kazin, p. x). *Since Marx and Freud, discovering one's point of view has come to mean discovering what determines it.... Going through the disciplinary checkpoints of the knowledge industry, the essayist ... must declare his intentions....* Whereas Montaigne wrote with one eye on the world and the other on himself, the modern essayist, *sub specie academiae*, works with one eye on the object of study while the other nervously reviews the methods by which he is authorized to know or interpret. (Kauffmann, 1989, p. 223)

We deny origins at our peril, it seems. The essay at its best seeks out its own origins; perhaps not in the nervous, almost sinister sense Kauffmann seems to allude to but rather in a spirit of discovery. Kauffmann makes another more literal point. Freud and Marx push us to work with the dialectic of the radically personal and the radically political. One must pay one's dues, pay due homage to psychoanalytic and critical origins. Ultimately, of course, I will have to present *my* documents at the knowledge industry checkpoints-- and they had better be in order. As I essay, I constantly feel a pressure to acknowledge the Giants. It is disconcerting and occasionally amusing to realize how I "nervously review the methods."

There are silences within our beings and within our culture, silent spaces between the lines of any text. Men's silences may often be about matters of vulnerability or fear. The silence may be about speech apprehended, the silence of a knowing that yearns to be brought to language but knows not how. It may be about the tense and painful silence of subjugation, of the suppression and denial of the fullness of Being, of that which is not allowed in the cultural story. In the case of violence, his attempts to silence Other may be his response to the unspeakableness of his own pain and impotence. But Other always breaks through.

There is another kind of silence or space in the authority of the text, on a psychoanalytic view: "Heraclitus says a long time ago: "You would not find out the limits of the psyche, even though you should travel every road: so deep a logos does it have" (cited in Grange, 1988, p. 170). Language is both limitation and evocation-- it is all we have. Language, vetted through the Law-of-the-Father, becomes the map that *authorizes* and enables passage through the "checkpoints of the knowledge industry." The authoring/authored self, on such a view, is radically decentered. *It* cannot speak for itself--the Other speaks through it. On this account, nothing is for sure, nothing can be "authentic," nothing can be authored for all time:

> [Lacan says that] *the human essence is through and through linguistic*. Such an understanding of psyche 'devastates man' from top (the realm of reason) to bottom (the realm of drive, instinct, and the somatic functions). Indeed we are sent reeling, but the careening of this decentered self has a road map, protean though it be. It is into the loops of language that we reel and the spool of our being is wound into those rings of a necklace that is itself a ring in another necklace. *Reels on reels that make up our humanity*. (Grange, p. 172)

The methodological questions here become more pressing ones than I might have anticipated. Men's texts are filled with images of silence as strength and control, but not as pain and anguish and desire. The silences are defined in shadow by the canons of form and the languages. We "write" silences, these invisibilities and unspeakabilities, between the lines. We are writing interpretations, interpretations of interpretations. We are writing a genre, a tradition of writing and textuality. In doing so, we are also writing gender. The question is, then-- can I essay such silences? Can men tell me that about the *absence* in their texts? *Can the essay deconstruct itself?* Can any genre do so? I can at this point only affirm my *intent* to take forays into the silence, and to try to name and challenge the limits when I encounter them.

I begin by raising question of authorial voice and its relation to a "writerly text" that invites conversation-- and unwittingly find myself reflecting on silence. What I write, whether I perceive it clearly or not, is already *my* narratives and the cultural narratives that inform them. I am not only gatherer and conveyor of the "data," including the data of my life; I am an interpreter or broker who sets out to build new bridges between solitary man and "his" culture, between nature and culture. If this project represents a challenge to men to reach into the silences of their inner selves and their relations with others, and to reach for words and language to express the pain and desire they must surely feel; then it is first a challenge for me to reach into and perhaps reauthorize my own. Even a rigorous reflexivity cannot fully resolve the problem of author/authoring: "The author must either offer an interpretation of the limitations of that experience, or incorporate the voices of other experiences. This merely reinscribes, not only the privileged place of experience, *but the privileged place of the author's experience*" (Grossberg, in Probyn, 1993, p. 27). *Nollo contendre*!

Text as Constitutive

If essayistic text and its author-ity have profound limitations, it is still filled with possibilities and evocations. Geertz's well-known story captures such evocation:

> For Geertz, the indeterminacy of texts and the constitutive aspect of the performance of texts provide good cause to celebrate: 'The wrenching, sour and disabused, that Lionel Trilling somewhere quotes an eighteenth-century aesthetician as asking-- "How Comes It that we all start out Originals and end up Copies?"--finds... an answer that is surprisingly reassuring: *it is the copying that originates*.' (cited in White & Epston, 1990, p. 13)

The aesthetician captures both life's continuity and its performative originality. It is perhaps in his plaintive question and answer that we find the place of the essayistic text, not only in representation of men's historical dilemmas and even of the culture's dilemmas, but as evocation and originality. *It is the copying that originates.* Human beings have always told stories within stories; new stories upon old ones. Textuality precedes us, and lives beyond us.

Textuality is about a writing, but also always about a reading. The text always means more than the author intends or realizes. In that context, perhaps the text is never finished, never turned finally over to its reader for their judgement of its worth. If a text such as "mine" makes "good sense," it makes a call on men in particular to act on the "new tellings," to *perform* the story:

> It is this 'relative indeterminacy of a text' that 'allows a spectrum of actualisations.' And so, '*literary texts initiate performances of meaning rather than actually formulating meaning themselves'*.... Thus, in two senses, the text analogy introduces us to an intertextual world. In the first sense, it proposes that person's lives are situated in texts within texts. In the second sense, every telling or retelling of a story, through its performance, is a new telling that encapsulates and expands upon the previous telling. (citing Bruner, in White & Epson, 1990, p. 13)

The utility, the power, and, yes, the beauty of an essay, then, goes far beyond that of a static discourse about contemporary culture, an instrumental reporting of facts, or a poetic expression of one writer's feelings. It can try to be those things, but it is always something qualitatively more. The essayistic text, unlike the formal and disembodied "readerly text" of the research report in the rational-empirical mode, is a "writerly text"; a text that invites "two way traffic in ideas" (Rosenau, 1992). It opens a conversation between its writer and reader, demanding much of both. The essay invites. It moves and lives. Even as it "copies," it is fecund and germinal. In a conflicted spirit of both apprehension and trust, I will in time turn my text over to the community of readers, "completed" for such action as it sees fit. As author I must, it seems, let the text stand at the moment of publication. An essayist such as I, writing in an argumentative genre, hopes and tries to ensure that his intention and his gloss on the topic will stand. At some point it must be considered finished. The text becomes authoritative or not depending on its appeal and rhetoric, the believability of its truth claims, its entertainment value, its *reflexivity*. The essay can only make forays, foraging for bits of truth that stand for as long as its reader permits. It is never the whole story.

Language, as always, is in the center: "Language is man's bodily punishment. The variety of tongues is a testament to human distractedness. But the deepest separation in man is not between men, as painful and dangerous as it is, but *the separation within a man from the word of his life*" (O'Neill, 1982, p.33). It hardly needs saying at this point that the essayistic text, as any text, functions as a "mirror of gender" (Gerhart, 1992) and evokes the performance of gender. Through its vertical and horizontal elements, the essay seeks to evoke possibilities and to engage the reader in considering particular glosses on its topic. The essay is a chronicle of *selves*. Probyn (1993) reminds us that those selves are always gendered: "As an object, the self has been variously claimed and normally left in a neutered 'natural' state, the sex of which is a barely concealed masculine one. And until very recently, *when selves got spoken they were also taken as a-gendered although of course they were distinctly male*" (p. 2).

Embodying/Writing Man

> Reading and writing may properly be regarded as bodily conduct. Since reading and writing.... are inseparable activities, we need to consider writing as a bodily art, aimed at and experiencing the same corporeal integration and suffused pleasure as reading. In this

> sense, the author, whether reading or writing, is a kind of physician, a body probing another body. (O'Neill, 1982, p. 91)

If the essayist is indeed such a "physician," the male patient is apt to be uncooperative. The physician may have to be inventive in prescribing a cure that avoids naming the dis-ease, for men have been remarkable adept at denying the body. Jackson (1990) describes in dramatic fashion that his own body has to "fall apart" completely due to a serious coronary problem for him to be able to "write" it in his critical autobiography. What, then, of the embodied self as "essay"? Is it a masculine or a feminine body, an agentic body or a body written upon, a willing or unwilling patient?

> In short, Montaigne comes upon the discovery that *the self is a form of writing, a bodily improvisation of nature and culture that not even Wisdom herself is willing to separate*. Writing is the moving trace of our temporality, holding in being what comes to be through withholding. Writing, like love, is an event within that fold of being created by a man bent upon himself in the evocation of his life, through which he sounds out the truth and goodness of his own sense and reason as exemplars of his kind. Writing is the unfinished creation of man because man is never ahead of himself.... Writing/reading resounds human being because it is an intersensory and bodily accumulation of man's experience that has always to be taken up in telling, or listening, in pain and in pleasure. (O'Neill, 1982, pp. 137-138)

Writing and rewriting makes a particular claim on behalf of our culture's movement and desire to understand and to act: "Fundamental to the notion of research as writing is the semiotic idea that the research text makes a claim to a certain autonomy, and further that the text aims at a certain effect in its dialogic relation to the reader." (Van Manen, 1989, p. 2). Writing reflects a moment of profound separation of the body from itself; it is a separation that anticipates connection, a means to intimacy with our "knowledge," our body, our self:

> Writing gives appearance and body to thought. And as it does, we disembody what in another sense we already embody. However, not until we had written this down did we quite know what we knew. *Writing separates the knower from the known... but it also allows us to reclaim this knowledge and make it our own in a new and more intimate manner*. (Van Manen, 1989, p.116)

I am intrigued with this dialectic of separation and unity, distance and proximity, self and self-as-written.. There is a sense that we, absorbed as we are in our own experience of our experience, could not possibly know fully that of which we write--even in the sense that others might come know "it" when they read it. In an important sense the text is a spiral, each coil of which, in the writing/rewriting process, both reveals more and constitutes more. "That experience structures expression and expression structures experience was for Dilthy a hermeneutic circle" (Bruner & Turner, 1986, p. 6). If essayistic writing is reflexive in a personal sense, it is also so in the sense that men's *knowing* informs and is informed by men's *being*. The hermeneutic circle is really a spiral, a living spiral. The essayist's embodied self and the research proposition and the essay about the research proposition and the reflection on the essay about the research proposition really constitute one text, continually bending back upon itself.

Narrative Spirals

I have by now related many narratives and made many references to narrativity as a core aspect of life and of textuality. What particular aspects of *narrative* are useful from a methodological point of view: how does narrative "service" the essay (Chatman, 1990), and how can it help us to understand the dilemmas of men? Does narrative represent the *merely* horizontal of the essay; the trivia and minutae of life that do not count for much in the scheme of men's lives? Where and how do we find the truth in narrative, in its relation to one man's "real" life, in its relation to the grand themes of his time in history?

The service of narrative standing against other forms of discourse lies not in its recounting of fact, nor in some deterministic notion of the correspondence of the facts of a man's life with the canons of his time; but in its explication of *facticities* and its evocation of *performative possibilities* within more epic cultural narratives. What does story mean to its teller? Narrative is neither a mere text about real life events, nor a mimetic stand-in for life. It is always a presentation of what is "real" to us at the moment, amidst a re-presentation and reworking of what has been real before. Narrative gathers a life, creates it, and recreates it. *It is the very process of life's construction:*

> I believe that the ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing that go with them become so habitual that they finally become recipes for structuring experience itself, for laying down roots into memory, for not only guiding the life narrative up to the present but directing it into the future. I have argued that a life as led is inseparable from a life as

> told-- or more bluntly, a life is not `how it was' but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold. (Bruner, 1987, p. 31)

Men once looked for truth in narratives of the earth, and in the heavens. The Renaissance inaugurates the search for subjectivity: the intensifying of men's search within them-selves (Montaigne's and Rembrandt's turns), and the separation of body from mind and Self from Other (Descartes' turn); the very inauguration of Self. Narratives, then, are not merely capricious or solipsistic, for some narratives are given preferential treatment by the culture. Crites' (1971) notion of three *narrative tracks*-- the sacred cultural story, the mundane stories of daily life, and the temporality of experience--might help to us bridge the individual and the cultural. On his view, mundane and sacred stories are intertwined and interdependent; becoming a seamless whole over time. The sacred stories are vertical ones, the "shoulds" of life, the icons, the imperatives, life's continuity. And at times its hegemonies.

I oversimplify the matter of course. If narrative is a rich tapestry, the weft needs the warp to give it structure, and the warp needs weft to give it texture and color. The binary need not be so. Bruner would likely call the warp threads "primary narratives." They are in a sense sacred/grand narratives that evoke possibility and structures for life--that make life possible--but they are also gatekeeping narratives or metanarratives that set out the limits:

> In my view, we begin with a [cultural] narrative that already contains a beginning and an ending, which frame and hence enable us to interpret the present. It is not that we initially have a body of data, the facts, and then we must construct a story or theory to account for them. Instead, the narrative structures we construct... are primary narratives that establish *what is to count as data*. (citing Bruner, in White & Epston, 1990, p. 11)

Narratives are the accretions of life's commonplaces and daily learnings. If for Cartesian man thinking overrides or subverts feeling, it is only because he has constructed life that way. Man collectively accumulates a notion of what is to "count as data." He comes to know that certain matters cannot be questioned. He takes in the grand themes of life, weaving them into his narrative as best he can and, of course, denying his debt to the feminine in the weaving. But I paint an overly pessimistic picture. "Life experience is richer than discourse. Narrative structures organize and give meaning to experience, but there are always feelings and lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story" (Bruner, 1986, p. 143). There is always "insurrection," in Foucault's terms.

Narratives of self, of *men's* solitary selves, are mundane stories of consciousness. Mundane stories are radically intersubjective, historical, and temporal in nature for, as Bruner (1986) says in paraphrasing Dilthy's famous aphorism, "[we all] always enter society in the middle.... Life consists of retellings" (p. 12). Life would be impossible without the retellings and the possibilities of retelling. Retelling is a hermeneutic enterprise. Life's retellings are never constructed in linear fashion. They are rather, like a hermeneutic spiral, a "reading" and interpreting, a re-reading and re-interpreting, a co-constituting over time, a moving spiral. Gerhart (1992), in a provocative analysis of literary genre and gender, visualizes the spiral as closing in on successively more refined (better) interpretations.

Meaning, in Crites' (1986) view, is always retrospective. Life continually re-collects itself: "The remembered past is situated in relation to the present in which it is re-collected. The child is not the father of the man. The man, in this respect, is father of the child he once was, who still lives as the remembered eye and ear and voice that is his own, but who must be called up as his own in recollection" (p.158). Though this view of origins owes a debt to Freud, it is a much less deterministic view than Freud's, and perhaps ironically, a more Cartesian one in its cognitive aspects: "We think, therefore we can become."

Narrative is never static (when it seems to be so, we tend to advise a person to seek therapy). Narrative retellings are encompassed by but also re-form our structures. That fact represents life's continuity and our attempts to locate ourselves in the cosmos. Is everything in life then reduced to multiple constructions, even to a plethora of whimsical interpretations? Lyotard (1984) shows us that the "grand narratives" are crumbling in our time. No one is sure what to believe anymore. The keepers of the knowledge industry gates are in disarray, fighting among themselves about how to separate the Greeks from the barbarians. A technological instrumentalism threatens to foreclose on our very narrativity, albeit in the name of communication and the global village. But we must resist, for though narrative and narrativity may seem a relatively horizontal and "little" moment in the essay form as in life-- *it is the central moment.*

Spirals of Interpretation

> I do not know what to say about it, but it is evident from experience that so many interpretations disperse the truth and shatter it. Aristotle wrote to be understood; if he did not succeed, still less will another man, less able and not treating his own ideas.... Never

> did two men judge alike about the same thing, and it is impossible to find two opinions exactly alike, not only in different men but in the same man at different times.... It is more of a job to interpret the interpretations than to interpret the things, and there are more books about books than about any other subject: we do nothing but write glosses about each other. *The world is swarming with commentaries; of authors there is a great scarcity.* (Montaigne, 1958, III:13, pp. 817-818)

I pinch myself to realize that Montaigne writes four hundred years ago, for he expresses remarkably well the dilemmas of interpretation today. He hearkens to another time when he thinks (as we always think) that things were much simpler; a time when "truth" was presumed to be a unitary thing, true because the Church or some other authority said so. He seems even to foresee the post-modern dilemma of meaning and legitimation. But Montaigne should not be read as simply advocating a return to unitary truth--a rallying cry that we often hear in one form or another even today--for he is already discovering in his essaying the power of a man "authoring" his own local truth, directly and with passion. He advocates, rather, new interpretations and kinds of interpretation and legitimation.

Narrative, says Barthes, "ceaselessly substitutes meanings for the straightforward copy of the events to be recounted" (cited in White, 1980, p. 6). The landscape of consciousness constantly exerts its will over the landscape of action, though the landscape of action is itself a telling and a retrospective interpretation claiming to be "fact." Do people, then, always "smooth" their narratives (Spence, 1986)? What of nostalgia, the ultimate smoothing of what never quite was? Where is truth to be found:

> This incipient story, implicit in the very possibility of experience, must be such that it can absorb both the chronicle of memory and the scenario of anticipation, absorb them within a richer narrative form without effacing the difference between the determinacy of the one and the indeterminacy of the other.... The 'conscious present' is the moment of decision within the story as a whole... always the *decisive* episode. (Crites, 1971, p.303)

Life narratives are never fixed. Narrative is always "incipient," temporally unfolding; that is its radical potential. The "conscious present" is always an interpretive space, a recollection and a re-collection, an anticipation and evocation of what is to come. *What is to come for men and their Others* is the real research question in this study--but it is always an evocation of the possibilities that can be brought forth in the "conscious present." The evocation is through and through an interpretive enterprise, grounded in the ever-present cultural story that insists on the current conception of the "truth" and tries to feed man his lines. And yet, there are insurrections. For my conversants, the conversations with me as a researcher could in itself be insurrections, quests for new insights and new possibilities outside of the gaze of hegemonic manhood.

Interpretation is always an important methodological issue. It is a particularly important one to me in this study because the men who converse with me are so open about their lives, so prepared to make themselves vulnerable and to be "intimate" with me as the researcher and with the whole question of relation. They represent so much more than mere "data." I feel a deep commitment to honor them and their stories. I think often of each of them in the years that have intervened since our conversations. What, then, of the ethics of interpretation? It is one thing to theorize "absence" in men's relations--it is quite another to point to problematics in a particular man's life or to challenge his version of his life. It is easy indeed to categorize and pathologize aspects of a life as my profession so often does, as human services generally do, indeed as our culture always does. Interpretation can be a hegemonic enterprise indeed.

Might Gadamer's (1975) hermeneutics offer some relief, if not an antidote, to the question of cultural hegemony--or does it simply elide "it"? I want to draw on his powerful notion of the "hermeneutic conversation," what he calls the "third mode" of relation. Will my reader say (and perhaps with considerable justification) that I cannot have it both ways; that I cannot so relentlessly critique the idea of *essence* and yet appropriate the apolitical (my word, of course) and essentialist tradition from which Gadamer speaks? I take the risk, for he has something important to say about matters of interpretation that resonate with my feelings about my conversations with men.

Gadamer seeks to decenter the self of the research informant and of the researcher. Both must be prepared to give themselves over to the *question* that emerges from the event/process of genuine dialogue; to let go. What is more important than the answer is the question to which what is said is one answer, the "horizon of the question" (p. 333). He would not see his "fusion of horizons" in the relation between two people--researcher and informant, say--as one of domination or privileging of the self-I (the researcher). In one sense, though not in every sense, they could trade places. The locus of Gadamer's hermeneutics is *"between,"* inside the dialogue between the I who is open to the Thou through its consciousness of what the present and the past can say to them both. The openness of one to the other is fundamental, reciprocal. Each acknowledges the claim of the other in the sense of what it can say and its possibilities. It is a germinal hermeneutics of *intimacy.*

What of *method*? Gadamer seems to struggle, as I do, with the whole question of *method.* In his hermeneutic, the conversants seek a "fusion of horizons," a new in-between, a new synthesis and appropriation of history. An over-concern with method inevitably moves the conversation away from this "between," centering it on the I and privileging the researcher/writer's "fore-meaning" and framing of the question. We must focus on the *act* rather than the *tool* of understanding:

> Hermeneutic conversation, like real conversation, finds a common language, and this finding of a common language is not, any more than in real conversation, the preparation of a tool for the purpose of understanding but, rather, coincides with the very act of understanding and reaching agreement concerning the object takes place between two people. (pp. 345-346)

The "conversation" may be a face to face one, or a writer-reader one, though Gadamer wants to privilege written text: "Written texts present the real hermeneutic task. Writing involves self-alienation. Its overcoming, the reading of the text, is thus the highest task of understanding" (p. 352). If, as he says, the reader "belongs" to the text, my reader belongs to this essay. If it is a good essay, it will encourage its reader's consciousness. The reader and the writer must come to an understanding of their common project and their common history:

> A person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something.... But this kind of sensitivity involves neither neutrality in the matter of the object nor the extinction of one's self, but *the conscious assimilation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices*. The important thing is to be aware of one's bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings. (p. 238)

Gadamer, on my reading at least, wants truth to emerge from the event of dialogue, but it is still a foundational albeit "extramethodic" truth. Derrida would totally reject the notion of foundation, saying that meaning is always "deferred." Vattimo (1988) seems to advocate not giving up the search for foundations totally, but loosening its hold. For him, dialogue, not foundation, is *the site* of truth:

> For the Gadamer of *Truth and Method* it was a question of an `extramethodic' experience of truth: the truth of art, the truth of history, the truth of tradition living in language, as well as the constitutive linguisticalness of experience.... Rather, if it intends to be coherent

> with its own premises, hermeneutics must articulate itself *as dialogue*, thus committing itself concretely vis-a-vis the contents of tradition.... What is it that we want to say besides the fact that we talk about *dialogue as the only possible place for the event of truth*? (pp.405-406)

Ricoeur (1974) is not so concerned to displace Method; in fact he wants to center it: "*This means that the genuine hermeneutic circle is not psychological but methodological*. It is the circle constituted by the object that regulates faith and the method that regulates understanding. There is a circle because the exegete is not his own master" (p. 389). The exegete may not be his own master, but he (his body/self) is the site of accretion and formation/re-formation of his life; the intersection of nature and culture, the "mundane and sacred", the personal and political. But no, he is not his own master despite the monstrous myth of self and agency in our culture. He is agentic, but he is not his own master because there is meaning beyond him, whether we wish to see it as essence or as contingency, subject both to the continuities and to the vagaries and warring factions of the culture. Perhaps the essay as "dialogue" offers a possibility of *rapprochement*, acting as agent between warring factions, opening opportunity for conversation, announcing moments of truth and insurrection.

Gadamer would not want to frame his hermeneutic either as a discourse about power or even a discourse about gender. Both aspects would be bracketed in the search for the foundational knowledge that will show itself in the dialogical encounter. But if meaning is created in spirals, they are gendered spirals and, as Foucault's work would show us, instantiations of *power*. Issues of power are central, as I relentlessly argue, to narrative and to life. Much as we might have it otherwise, the interpreter-researcher *is always in the center and always gendered/gendering*. Much as we would have it otherwise, parts of the "dialogue" are subjugated. We must always try to bring that silence to speech; knowing all the while that we can only reach for its infinitude. Power and gender are central to the event of truth. And that brings me to my next point.

Inscribings of Power-- Power of Inscribings

My reader might quite rightly observe that I seem quite ambivalent about matters of power. Accounts of power that position solitary man either as co-conspirator in hegemony or as helpless and misunderstood victim, are neither complete nor very useful ones. In a sense, they elide both man's agency and his subversive potential. Foucault's view of the indivisibility of truth and power may be a useful counterpoint:

> *A primary effect of this power through 'truth' and 'truth' through power is the specification of a form of individuality, an individuality that is, in turn, a 'vehicle' of power. Rather than proposing that this form of power represses, Foucault argues that it subjugates.* It forges persons as `docile bodies' and conscripts them into activities that support the proliferation of `global' and `unitary' knowledges, as well as the techniques of power. (cited in White & Epston, 1990, pp. 19-20)

Foucault says power is "positive," not in the sense that it is inherently good or that it feels good, but in the sense that it constitutes persons. His distinction of repression from subjugation gets at one of his core notions; that of conscription or recruitment into particular knowledges that inform particular ways of being. I have so far vaguely referred to cultural narratives implicitly as some "thing" that we take account of in some way in constructing our lives; something that we might *choose* to take into our self-definition or to reject. Foucault's work would suggest that this particular notion of agency is misleading and simplistic. Such narratives are in various ways prescriptive not only of our public conduct but constitutive of our most private selfhood. They are rarely explicit. When they are explicit, they are not apt to be so in a way that invites challenge. It strikes me that a particularly potent aspect of power is the sort of metaprescriptions or metanarratives that prohibit or penalize challenge not only of certain narratives but even of the very existence of such a metaprescription. The power of metanarratives lie in their very silence and unspeakability. Men's denial of certain languages of "power" in the name of "freedom" may represent such a metanarrative.

If the essay can act in the service of narrative, such service carries power: "The essay is a political instrument inasmuch as it liberates the writer and reader from the domination of conventional standards of clarity and communication... against the limits of received language" (O'Neill, 1982, p. 9). The essay can liberate, but the matter is not so simple. As O'Neill suggests, we are never wholly free. We are, to repeat the point yet again, always constrained in a historical sense by the genres--what may be said in a particular time--and by langugage. The power of the author to invent text and language is constrained by convention and traditional epistemologies. It is thus, too, in the constructions of our lives, and it is one of man's greatest follies to assume otherwise.

Sartre says "Life stories must mesh, so to speak, within a community of life stories; tellers and listeners must share some `deep structure' about the nature of a `life'" (Bruner, 1987, p.21). Men form such communities, among other communities. The communities that prescribe and inform narratives of manhood are powerful ones indeed, as I will show in the following chapters. But if cultural narratives are often invisible and even unspeakable, they are also far from monolithic, for the self is constructed from and within a web of possibilities and accountings of contradictions. If we can say there is a normative verticality about cultural stories, Foucault would say there is also resistance.

The Community of Truth

> For [Montaigne's] essay is not the provisional or incidental expression of a conviction that might on a more favorable occasion be elevated to the status of truth or that might just as easily be recognized as error (of that kind are only the articles and features referred to as 'chips from their workshop,' with which learned persons favour us); *an essay is the unique and unalterable form that a man's inner life assumes in a decisive thought*. (citing Musil in O'Neill, 1982, pp. 168-169)

I have touched (no, it has been a very heavy hand indeed) on many issues of "truth" so far in this essay, and in particular in this chapter on *methodology*. It is time, perhaps, to more directly address the criteria by which the project will be judged; both as a statement about men's ways of being, and as a doctoral dissertation. What is essayistic truth, and how is it to be weighed?

I solicit my reader's assent in this journey of truth; appealing, as Montaigne does, to "a reader whose good sense is the sense of the community in which men are true to themselves" (O'Neill, 1982, p. 163). If such assent is given, how will the reader recognize *good sense*?" If good sense is reflected in an essayistic argument, do we say that the essay "works"?

> *What the essayist must achieve is an exemplary self-education* in which his book tests him as other men are tested by the events and fortunes of the world.... On the one hand, there is the image of looking into the self as into a mirror, into a place that is still and removed from the world. On the other hand, there is the idea that, after all, the world of action is our mirror, and we shall discover our portrait only through how we manage to conduct ourselves within the storm. (O'Neill, 1982, p. 173).

The first test, then, is the effectiveness of my argument and appeal to good sense in my own life. The test is to act and live. Is it clear to my reader that I am "walking the talk," as the aphorism goes? It will not do to try to purvey a ready-made conclusion to the reader. I am conveying "certain" positions, to be sure, but my reader will decide how to deal with those positions. There is no place, either, for dispassionate distance on my part or on the reader's part. As I have already begun to show, such denial of passion-- far from being neutral-- subjugates in the very name of neutrality.

Salner (1986) says, "The human science researcher becomes a prisoner of the discourse if he or she does not become, methodologically, a conscious participant" (p.121). As researcher I am that "conscious participant," the reflexive center of my essay. Through my self portraits, I become in a sense the "thread" that connects stories and themes and puts them to the community. Transparency is a critical part of that consciousness, for in a sense it is that transparency that enables the reader to judge the worth of the authorial thread:

> For human science research to be valid, the researcher must demonstrate cognizance of his or her position within this context as one small thread in the large tapestry of on-going conversation and debate that shapes the social matrix defining a community. The human science researcher must take responsibility for connecting the "story" that he or she is creating as a result of the inquiry 'to the stories that are current in the society at large and thus to expose them both to mutual discussion and criticism.' (citing Bellah et al., in Salner, 1986, p.115)

Inevitably, the text becomes more declarative than the saying, more declarative than the experience it announces, more declarative even than the narrative may seem to deserve. On the other hand, it does provide the opportunity for retrospective knowing and interpretation. There is an ever-present danger of taking the text as a representation of "real," centered subjects and thus of denying its fundamentally interpretive base. It is at once the very condition for, and the limit to, interpretation. But in hermeneutics, Ormiston and Schrift (1990) say, "there are only interpretations of interpretations" (p.2). *Reflexivity* must be at the core.

The essayistic *text* must, within itself, pass the obvious tests of logical and rhetorical consistency and clarity. But no text is an island. Every text depends on other texts to give it meaning, legitimacy, a history--and a language. Gerhart's (1992) analysis of genre is helpful here. She shows, drawing from Derrida's work, that every text "participates" in several literary genres. It follows from this that textual truth cannot be evaluated without reference to its implicit genres and traditions, its intertextualities.

O'Neill (1982) says that "What is revealed in the postures that inhabit the self-portraits [Montaigne's & Rembrandt's] is that we have a place to receive him that is more honest than our minds" (p. 179). This leads to the criteria of *phenomenal truth.* The essay must give an account of "plain men's" lives and experiences such that plain men will say, "That's right, that's how it is (or could be)." I refer here to the truths in personal narratives, in a sense, but to more than that. I want to say that I refer to an *essence* of a phenomenon. But I hesitate to use this word, wanting to avoid getting embroiled in another essentialist debate. Can one man, even in defiance of cultural narratives about objective (disembodied) truth, say, however haltingly and tentatively to another man, "Yes, perhaps that is how I would like it to be, for my *heart* says it should be so?" Can one woman say this about men or one man?

Narratives are inseparable from their narrators. In the sense that narratives represent biographies of real lives as constructed by real persons, they must be authentic accounts. O'Neill (1982) puts forth some very useful criteria for narrative truth in the essay: As author I must take personal responsibility for the text; I must be the same person exemplified in organization and content of the text-- I must exist as the person I portray; what I report must be true or plausibly true, and I must believe the account myself. (p. 167)

But for all our concern with authenticity; narrative truth is always constructed truth, truth that guides the narrator's life. It is truth that is true to its narrator first of all, but always embedded in and enframed by cultural narratives and thus by history. The narrator must be the ultimate judge of such truth as it guides his life. But I portray narrative naively here as a discrete "thing," explicit, subject to cool appraisal. Do we always tell the truth as best we can, as we might feel it deep in our hearts? There are all sorts of reasons not to:

> Crafty tellers try to avoid getting caught. They wriggle out of their stories like a snake shedding old skins, Sartre says, celebrating negation as the foundation of human consciousness. Settling into our stories is bad faith, he warns us; it is capitulating, forgetting that there is always a face beneath the mask. The politics of narrative is not, then, merely a social struggle but an ontological one as well. (Grumet, 1991, p. 69)

The truth value of narrative lies, in the constructivist project of life-creation, not in its correspondence with external fact but in the experience of the teller and the listener. A different conception of truth is pointed to. Truth is what is told, and how it is told, how it is experienced and lived. Truth is always contingent and open-textured. It is, more than anything, this very relativity and subjectivity that we need to understand. Fact, if it can be said to exist at all, becomes less important than what Merleau-Ponty calls "facticities.... the descriptions of how facts were lived and experienced by interacting individuals" (cited in Denzin, 1989, p.23).

O'Neill makes, perhaps, one of the strongest arguments for narrative truth. The Self is illusory. Fact is illusory. Life is intersubjective and always an interpretive enterprise:

> In both cases, there is a profundity of borrowings, copies and plagiarism that are shocking to the originality of the substantial self, but absolutely true to the world's metamorphosis, and to the daily debts of our living. The self-essayist discovers that the self is not the foundation of the world's values. The world has no author, unless it be God. The self therefore can only consist of a daily improvisation. (O'Neill, 1982, pp. 179-180)

Whither, Then, the Essay

And so, my reader might ask, is "truth" reduced totally to a relativity and subjectivity, even to artifice and whimsy? Narrative inquiry fails the positivistic truth tests; I have already much belabored that point. But we must have faith in the capacity and good will of plain men. Men want new truths, new tellings, new possibilities. We must simply find ways to still the dominant story, to create spaces for retellings that bring us closer to one another. Can Montaigne's essay genre be rehabilitated to create such spaces?

My essay is nothing if not a vigorous critique of dominant truths and stories of truth making. To judge its truth is a political enterprise. Who could judge such a relative thing? But who could claim to avoid such a judgement? I hope for my reader's assent to my arguments. I hope that men will give a nod of recognition to what I have to say. But what if assent is not forthcoming? What if I am greeted with silence? In some ways, to stir strong reaction, whether of approval or disapproval, could be seen as an achievement if not a passing of the test. One test of *political truth* could even be the degree and quality of opposition engendered by the piece. But opposition for its own sake is not my aim.

Chapter Five

INVENTING MANHOOD

Introduction

The *question* of manhood--who are men and what is manhood in actuality-- is an implicit theme in all of Modern his-story. And yet, it is a question that could only recently be asked (at least by men); it has been hidden under essentialist ideology and suppressed by male hegemony and what I will call *gender gymnastics*. Gender gymnastics seeks to keep the spotlight off manhood and on Woman as Man's Other and man's "not." Turning the spotlight on men is a relatively recent phenomenon, made possible and imperative by the advent of such developments as the contemporary women's movement, gay liberation, the anti-war movement. Under the glare, many interesting things are showing themselves. For some men that is apt to represent opportunity and possibility, while for others it more likely represents crisis.

Why study *manhood* if our concern is with *intimacy*? Generic man has written intimacy as a theological, unitary, universal, agenderal, and apolitical project. Generic man has written psychology, sociology, the physical sciences, among others, in ways amenable to his interests. Generic man has written virtually everything but himself *qua man*. All of that is changing, though not so rapidly as some would like. Man is taking tentative forays into the unknown territory of men writing about men. Women probably still do it better, in my estimation. But I am very much ahead of myself. How is manhood connected with intimacy? I leave the question in abeyance, as a guidepost.

This chapter is the first of three chapters addressing moments in man's construction of himself; specifically his construction of *masculinities*. I cite such moments as found in exemplary essays about men. These essays are not all personal or Montaignean in form. Many, though not all, are by men. I often quote quite extensively with a view to showing not only what I consider to be the essence of the essayist's construction of manhood, but something of the process of essaying as well. In each case, too, I essay the essay; putting my own gloss and organization on the passages. At best such excerpting can never do full justice to the original. At worst, my reader may say it is reductionistic. There can be no unproblematic reading, and my reader will undoubtedly experience some tensions in this process. But this is an essay, after all, and struggle *is* its work. I

Adam Remained Silent

The legend of the Fall, central as it has long been in the European Christian tradition, can hardly be taken as the beginning point in the development of gender rules and roles. Its centrality in that tradition may, though, make a useful beginning point for my particular ideological inquiry.

> Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.... Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2: 18, 23*)*
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> Where was Adam when the serpent tempted Eve? The Bible says that after Eve was Deceived by Satan, she took some of the forbidden fruit... and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, *who was with her* and he ate it' (Genesis 3:6). Was Adam there the whole time? Was he standing right next to his wife while the serpent tricked her with his cunning? Was he there, listening to every word? If he was--and there is good reason to think so--then a big question must be asked: *Why didn't he say anything?*
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> Before God created Eve, he had already commanded Adam to never eat from a certain tree. Adam was expected to pass on the prohibition to his wife when she appeared on the scene. We assume he did so.... Remember, Eve was deceived by the snake, but Adam wasn't (1 Timothy 2:14). He knew what was going on. Perhaps he should have said, 'Now, wait just one minute here! Honey, this snake is up to no good. I can see right through his devilish cunning. He's deceiving you into thinking you have more to gain from disobeying God than by remaining faithful to him. That's a lie! . . . .
>
> But Adam said nothing. He stood there, heard and watched the whole thing, and didn't say a word. *He failed his woman.* He failed, in his first spiritual struggle, to represent God. He failed as a man! The silence of Adam is the beginning of every man's failure, from the rebellion of Cain to the impatience of Moses, from the weakness of Peter down to my failure yesterday to love my wife well.... *A man is most comfortable in situations in which he knows exactly what to do.* When things get confusing and scary, his insides tighten and he backs away. When life frustrates him with its maddening unpredictability, he feels the anger rise within him. And then, filled with terror and rage, he forgets God's

> truth and looks out for himself.... It is time for men to recover their voices, to listen to God--and to speak. (Crabb, 1995, pp. 11-12)

A friend lends me Crabb's book with great excitement, saying that she hopes I will find it, as she and her husband do, a refreshing new slant on the old Adam and Eve stuff. The old story is familiar: Adam needs a helpmate, God creates Woman from his rib, she is inveigled by the serpent into evil and thence leads Adam astray. The excerpt from Crabb's preface is anything but a new spin on the story that has so long provided the backdrop for Christian discourses of gender relations. *Man must break his silence*, he says; the silence that has been his failure throughout the ages (it is not exactly silence, however, for as Crabb acknowledges, man has always needed to infallibly speak with certainty). Man is to take responsibility for what is his, but *for more than that:* He is to take leadership and control, for he knows what woman does not know and he can do what she cannot do. *The serpent invites Eve to think for herself, to make choices*. This is not to be; Adam must pass on God's prohibitions to her.

Crabb writes from the perspective of a Christian counsellor who works with men, in the "with it" voice of New Age man. He writes in a language of born-again essentialism--long used to justify the image of woman as temptress--now promising a new perspective on manhood. Does it work? Does Crabb's new story exonerate woman as he claims, or does it simply reinscribe man's power and superior position; moving him from the self-righteous one who was led astray by the temptress, to the strong one who knows God's will? The new story still damns Eve with the faintest of praise. Silence of a certain sort is power. Being God's spokes*man* is power.

What is new in Crabb's retelling? His essay makes some very interesting points about the need for men to get in touch with themselves (their real deep-down selves) and to honor the others in their lives. It is on the face of it similar to the appeal of the *Promise Keepers*' movement. If being real as a man often means being vulnerable and allowing himself to be vulnerable, as he *says* it does, I wonder what a contemporary Christian man is to make of this new/old Adam and Eve-- this Adam who must take charge, this Eve who now deserves our sympathy and support *because she cannot be expected to know truth*? In the end, Crabb remains complicit in the structures of male hegemony. Hegemony can appear in forms that are ever so gentle and ever so subtle. Crabb seems gentle enough, but he is anything but subtle.

The old story says that Adam needs a helpmate. On a surface reading, we might ask what "help" a man needs: can he be intimate with woman without her help as emotional broker or mentor? Can he be intimate if he is unable or unwilling to give up his hegemonic position as it is reinscribed in some contemporary theologies ? Can there be intimacy in a scenario of unequal power? What are the implications in the story of Woman as Other coming *from* man's body? How will we come to understand this gymnastic exercise by which one sex becomes two, thus instituting man's eternal search for reunion with his Other?

Greek Love

Contemporary Western thought owes a great debt to the early Greeks. Richards (1987), in his exploration of the roots of Victorian ideologies of manhood, gives us an account of its debts to the Greek tradition of love between men, sex between men and boys. In our time, faced with the tensions and contradictions of increasingly visible, "out of the closet" homosexual manhoods set against an ever-virulent homophobia, it may be useful to look at Greek conceptions of manhood. Is it a golden age?

Intense physical and spiritual relationships between men are central to the structure of early Greek society:

> While Plato undoubtedly acknowledged the centrality of the relationship between males to Greek culture and society, calling it the highest form of love, *he also stressed the need to proceed from physical to spiritual communion*.... Dover has concluded that homosexual relationships supplied the need for personal relations of an intensity not found in marriage or family. Women were regarded as inferior intellectually, physically and emotionally, and males tended to congregate in groups where pair-bonding took place. (p. 94)

How do the Greeks construct manhood? Though there is a strong erotic and explicitly homosexual component to relations among men, "spiritual communion" is always to be at the core. The sexual relationship, it seems, does not in itself define the relation; nor does it seem to define what we might now call a homosexual identity position:

> Homosexuality in Greece related closely to masculinity. The basic Greek homosexual relationship was between an older man (*erastes*) and a youth (*eromenos*). The older man admired the younger specifically for his male qualities (beauty, strength, speed, endurance) and the younger man respected the older for his experience, wisdom, and

> command. The older man was expected to train, educate and protect the younger and in due course the young man grew up and became a friend rather than lover-pupil and sought out his own *eromenos*. (pp. 94-95)

The relation between the older and younger man is clearly not one of equals, and cannot be if the older man is to preserve his sense of masculinity:

> In sex the older man was expected to be the *active partner*, the youth the passive partner. Both males were expected in due course to marry females and father children.... So Greek society was *genuinely bisexual*, but within certain strictly defined limits, for it disapproved of sexual relationships between men of the same age. This was deemed unnatural because one of the men adopted a passive position, thereby betraying the masculinity which required him to take the active role. *So long as a man retained the active role and his sexual partner was a woman (naturally inferior), a slave (unfree) or a youth (not yet a fully-grown man), his masculinity was preserved.* (p. 95)

The early Greeks are remarkably clear on the boundaries of such Platonic relationships. They value marriage and procreation, it seems, but insist on the secondary status of women, children, and slaves. They value manhood by its public responsibilities, and by its valence of agency over passivity. Sex is not the main thing, we are to believe, for even in the midst of sexualized relationships between men and boys, they insist that a higher "spiritual communion" is really the goal. Platonic love may not be, for all its insistence on the secondary position of women, an unproblematic one *for older men* of the time.

According to Richards, Aristotle advocates a non-sexual love between older men: "equals, men of similar age, rank, habits and sentiments, attracted by each other's character" (p. 95). Real men will be reassured to know that Aristotle also opposes effeminacy for men. Love between men is apt to be about looking after business, men looking out for men's interests. Sedgwick (1985) reinforces the important point that both Greek and contemporary love between men are about *power*:

> For the Greeks, the continuum between 'men loving men' and 'men promoting the interests of men' appears to have been quite seamless.... We may take it as an explicit axiom that the historically differential shapes of male and female homosexuality--much as they themselves may vary over time--will always be articulations and mechanisms of the enduring inequality of power between men and women. (pp. 4-5)

Early Greece may be known as the cradle of democracy, but such a notion belies the oppression and even brutal treatment of women, slaves, and younger men. Riane Eisler (1995), in her book *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body* documents what she calls the "cult of the phallus" among Greek men:

> All sexual relations involving males, be they homosexual or heterosexual, conformed to the dominator model; in other words... they met the requirement that sex be *not* an act of giving and receiving pleasure between equals, but one of domination and submission.... The much-discussed 'liberality' of ancient Athens toward homosexuality was not so liberal after all.... It is therefore no wonder... that the Athenian Greeks were obsessed with [rape]. (citing Keuls, pp. 107-108).

It will be interesting to see how the "line" of intimacy, sexuality, propriety, and power in men's relations with men will be defined and redefined over time. It is already clear that *agency* will endure through time as a prized aspect of manhood. What will the Medieval Christian church make of these gender arrangements?

Medieval Man

Richards (1987) continues his account with an exploration of men's relationships in the Medieval era. I am surprised to note that the Christian church, though it takes up a different ethic including "the primacy of celibacy, the acceptance of marriage as a necessary evil and the rejection of all forms of sex outside marriage" (p. 95), still embraces a certain love between men. Richards doubts it is likely in this time to be expressed in a sexual way:

> The language that [male] friends used to one another was extravagant and frankly erotic in the Middle Ages.... This love should not, however, be interpreted as necessarily homosexual. For clerics could not have written so regularly and unguardedly to each other in these terms, given the heavy penitential punishments for homosexuality at this time, if it had not been a non-sexual expression of romantic affection. (p. 97)

Despite what might be seen as an idolization of Woman in the courtly love position that evolves in this time; the Christian church's prohibitions against sex between men and against marital infidelity should not be mistaken for some new deal for women. In *Medieval Masculinities* (Lees, 1994) we find rich and diverse accounts of masculinities and their constructions across the vast cultural, class, and temporal landscape that we call the Middle Ages. I confess to astonishment on a least two accounts: at the complexities of life and ideological constructions in a this in-between time of history, and at the resonances of issues of gender with those debated today. As we might expect in this time, the Christian church is to be found in the middle of struggles to define men and women and their relations. Lee's book focuses on "the millions of men who were only men" rather than the kings and noblemen, or even the knights, who are the subjects of traditional histories.

I choose to focus on one pivotal moment; not in any attempt to definitively represent such a long and diverse era, but rather for its interesting provocation to our contemporary ignorance about manhood's debt to the Medieval age. Jo Ann McNamara, in her chapter, documents a particular moment of masculine identity crisis beginning in the eleventh century: the *Herrenfrage* (it is when I first read her article that the metaphor of *gender gymnast* comes to mind). This moment comes about due to a need for the younger generation to move from rural to urban centers in search of a livelihood.

Women are, in this time, firmly defined as "men who lack" (p. 23); a view that will prevail until the eighteenth century: "*The prevailing biological definition of the female as a defective male subsumed women at the lower end of a single continuum*" (p. 3). How can man reassert his place in relation to these "defective males," in a time when brawn and warrior qualities are neither needed nor valued (a dilemma that resonates with other more contemporary post-war moments)? It is an ideological problem of crisis proportions:

> *How can men redefine manhood to prove women's incapacity to carry out public responsibilities....* Masculine claims to inherent superiority were already well grounded in [male] theology. *Woman's 'natural' need to be ruled had been given divine sanction in the myth of the Fall.* It was expressed socially in the rituals of marriage, which equated male adulthood with the assumption of responsibility for a family of dependents and relegated women to the status of perpetual children. (p. 4)

In response to the economic and political crisis, the patriarchal Church tries to create spaces free of women. That may solve one perceived problem, but it creates other even more ominous ones--how are men to demonstrate their manhood?

> The gender system destabilized because celibate men monopolized most of the new positions, excluding women rigorously during the sensitive period of social readjustment.... Women's absence from competitive space had the advantage of allowing

> for an ungendered definition of man. *However, it deprived masculine individuals of objects for the sexual demonstrations that proved their right to call themselves men....* Can one be a man without deploying the most obvious biological attributes of manhood? If a person does not act like a man, is he a man? *And what does it mean to 'act like a man,' except to dominate women*? (p. 5)

The problems created are not confined to "people" ("ungendered public men") within the Church. Men in the secular world, too, are thrown into a parallel identity quandry. Many decide not to marry, for if men in the Church can be real men without women, so can secular men:: " *Men's failure to marry meant that gender roles went unenforced over a growing surplus of women, unprotected, uncontrolled, undefined*" (pp. 5-6). What to do with this troublesome excess of uncontrolled women, married or otherwise?

> The *Herrenfrage* precipitated the *Frauenfrage*: the problem of disposing of 'excess' women. For many twelfth-century people, the logical answer... was celibacy, a union of men and women free of sex and the gender roles that generally accompany sex. Monastic theory already defined celibate women as morally and intellectually equal to men. Thus, if they abandoned their family roles, nothing prevented them from following celibate men into the commodious spaces allotted to 'mankind.' *The entire gender system spun into crisis.* The *Herrenfrage* forced men to take extreme measures against the encroachment of women in nearly every area of life. The resulting *Frauenfrage* threatened to undermine the whole ideological base of masculinism. (pp. 5-6)

"Many men and even more women saw celibacy as an opportunity to escape the burdens and the constraints of male dominance" (p. 11). And so women, who in secular life are "defective" men, can achieve a measure of freedom and even equality by entering religious orders. Will it last? What will be the impact on men?

> These [monastic] women gave vivid new meaning to the ancient formulas praising virgin saints as 'virile' women, whose renunciation of sexual activity liberated their native manliness. They were seemingly the harbingers of a world in which the gender system might be utterly demolished. Men and women often worked alike and dressed alike. They might become indistinguishable if they really escaped sexuality and its procreative results. Indeed, if gender differences were reduced to the level of biology, *sex itself might be changed*. (p. 14)

We couldn't have that, of course. McNamara then makes the startling statement: "Whoring priests were little criticized.... The people who came in for incessant, hysterical criticism were the syneisactics [those who lived together monastically without reference to sex roles]" (p. 14). We should not be as startled by her next statement: "To restore the threatened boundaries between male and female, [influential men] had to restore the idea of man's raging, uncontrollable lust... [and] the dangers of poisonous, flaming, venomous women " (p. 16). One might ask in this or any time: what do men have to fear?

> Men fearful of women frightened women away from them, and where the *Herrefrage* was solved by the exclusion or claustration of women, the balance seemed lost forever. *Even womanly functions were claimed by men.* The affectionate clerical rhetoric that has been identified as a 'gay subculture' may easily have reflected the insecurity of men separated from women in expressing the affectionate relationships of 'people' outside the old gender system. Anselm of Bec saw both Jesus and himself as mothers. (p. 19)

In the end, a moment of opportunity for gender equality passes, and the barricades are re-erected:

> Men doomed themselves to support a construct of masculinity that defined them as those who fight, who dominate. The proponents of a less rigid, syneisactic system were silenced as heretics. Men burdened themselves with the task of imposing a masculinist perspective of the universe and enforcing political, religious, and social orthodoxy on everyone. *Increasingly constrained by these definitions, men lost the chance to share the burden of running the world with women or even with other men with different viewpoints....* This leaves us with a final formulation of the *He[illegible]ge*, as puzzling and vital today as it was a millenium ago: *Why do men feel the need to be 'MEN'*? (p. 22-23)

McNamara's final question is an important and a poignant one. Medieval woman's burdens are perhaps clear enough by her account. I read her question about men's burdens as more plaintive than angry. We cannot elide the burdens of men, even if they seem self-inflicted. A feminist analysis would say that all men are beneficiaries of patriarchal ideology. A class analysis would question the extent to which ordinary men feel agentic in this time or indeed in any time. But McNamara is talking about more than burdens, it seems. Why do men seem so determined to define themselves and the world in brittle and problematic terms? If McNamara's account is about the power of men to define and redefine gender it ideologically, and if men have the power to define women as "lack," what then are the chances and openings for intimate relation between men and women? The question might well serve as a guide as we move toward the Renaissance and Modernity. How will it be answered?

Writing Renaissance Man

I sit in my comfortable library with Descartes' *Discourses on Method* and Montaigne's *Essais* at hand. Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* (ca. 1628, said to be his first of many self-portraits) looks down upon me from the wall above my desk. Stacked at the side are commentaries, commentaries on the commentaries.... I am reminded of Montaigne's statement in his swan-song essay, *Of Experience*: "We do nothing but write glosses about each other. The world is swarming with commentaries; of authors there is a great scarcity" (1958, III, 13, p. 818). Though Montaigne increasingly comes to the view that within each "man" lies the *conditio humane*, he still consistently advocates that man must "author" himself. How, then, is man to author himself *as man,* as self, as subject--enclosed as he always is by cultural, even hegemonic stories and ideologies?

My three friends are Renaissance men who are particularly identified with the project of authoring and inventing the Self. It is, for the moment, a male self. They work independently of each other, but they share the ideologies and currents of this time of ferment; a time when the authority of the Church and of an external and omnipotent God is being challenged. Probably by dint of their caution and circumspection in not blatantly offending the Church hierarchy, they manage to fare better than Galileo does. It is a time, the Modernist Charles Taylor (1989) says, when man turns to "inwardness," to a new "radical reflexivity;" a time when he turns ever so gradually away from God and into himself for identity and certainty. Renaissance men cannot know within their time the impact of their work in the evolution of ideas, and certainly not on one reader such as I. I hasten to say to my reader that in so doing I am claiming neither that they alone "invent" the Self, nor that the invention emerges whole at a particular moment of the Renaissance, nor that it has remained unchanged since. But it will come to be a profoundly important notion that will continue to captivate us.

Of friendship.

Montaigne's essay, *Of Friendship* (1958, I:28) based on his friendship with Etienne de La Boétie, is a literary, historical, and political classic. It is an inspiring account of an exemplary friendship between men; a friendship of a particular time, yes, but one that can still inform and inspire.

Montaigne goes on at some length about "Greek love." He opposes the "four natural types" of friendship and the practical instrumentalism (among other things) of early Greek friendship. He objects to its structure as a temporary relation between an older and a younger man, and, probably, the requirement for the older man to be the active sexual partner:

> And that other, licentious Greek love is justly abhorred by our morality. Since it evolved, moreover, according to their practice, such a necessary disparity in age and such a difference in the lovers' functions, it did not correspond closely enough with the perfect union and harmony that we require here. *For what is this love of friendship? Why does no one love either an ugly youth or a handsome old man?* (Cicero). (p. 138)

But Montaigne's friendship with La Boétie could well be compared to the spiritual dimension in Greek love, if not to the sexual one. It transcends all other relationships, and most certainly all instrumental and political relationships; of which he has many. He describes a friendship rare among friendships between men throughout history. We might well ask if such a relation is possible between father and child. Montaigne says not, for "*From children toward fathers, it is rather respect*. Friendship feeds on communication, which cannot exist between them because of their too great inequality, and might perhaps interfere with the duties of nature" (p. 36). What, then, of brothers? No, brothers cannot be friends either, for "*The more they are friendships which law and natural obligation impose on us, the less of our choice and free will there is in them.* And our free will has no product more properly its own than affection and friendship" (p. 136) .

A man, a self, Montaigne concludes, must be self-determining and free to choose his associations. Friendship cannot allow itself to be burdened by the "natural obligation" of paternity or brotherhood.

Neither, he says, can the "ardor" of relation with women be in the same category as friendship:

> Its ardor... is more active, more scorching, and more intense. But it is an impetuous and fickle flame, undulating and variable, a fever flame, subject to fits and lulls, that holds us only by one corner. In friendship it is a general and universal warmth, moderate and even, besides, a constant and settled warmth, all gentleness and smoothness, with nothing bitter and stinging about it. What is more, *in love there is nothing but a frantic desire for what flees from us.* (p. 137)

Mere ardor is a fleeting thing. Marriage, he seems to say, is yet another thing, being a "bargain" that exacts a price. Only its entrance is free. "Besides, to tell the truth, the *ordinary capacity of* *women is inadequate for that communion and fellowship which is the nurse of this sacred bond;* nor does their soul seem firm enough to endure the strain of so tight and durable a knot" (pp. 137-138).

Having virtually dismissed women as possible intimates, and given us a glimpse of what friendship is *not*, Montaigne now returns to his friendship with La Boétie. His classic statement on friendship is written some years after his friend's death. Even today it has power and resonance if we can set aside contemporary society's homophobic preoccupations about such frank expressions of passion, albeit apparently non-sexual, between men:

> Only those are to be judged friendships in which the characters have been strengthened and matured by age (Cicero). For the rest, what we ordinarily call friends and friendships are nothing but acquaintanceships and familiarities formed by some chance or convenience, by means of which our souls are bound to each other. *In the friendship I speak of, our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again. If you press me to tell why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed, except by answering: Because it was he, because it was I*.... In this noble relationship, services and benefits, on which other friendships feed, do not even deserve to be taken into *account; the reason for this is the complete fusion of our wills.* (pp. 139-140)

Such an example is more than an interesting historical tidbit. It says much about Montaigne's conception of humanity, but in a more immediate sense it alerts us to an important aspect of the essay. Montaigne writes in the absent presence of his friend. Undoubtedly there is some smoothing going on here in the service of his essay project. But for me to become too preoccupied with the Renaissance affectation in Montaigne's musings on his friendship with La Boétie is to miss the point that he is not writing a personal diary. He intends that his writing will have public impact. Later Modernity would pathologize by a reading of latent homosexuality, or narcissism what once may have been a more comfortable relation between men. It *may* have been comfortable for many men of the time, but we must be careful not to assume some golden and unproblematic age of intimacy.

Montaigne makes it very clear that the intimacy of true (male) friends is on a much higher plane than the relationship of father to child. I wonder how he talks, if he talks at all, with his only surviving daughter Léonore in this early modern time. We might be led by Montaigne's comments on women and marriage to think that he dismisses women, even that he was somewhat misogynist by contemporary standards. He does share his intellectual life in some fashion with women, though not necessarily with his wife. Rider (1973) says: "[Montaigne's] marriage, though tolerable and even comfortable, was neither passionate nor intellectually stimulating" (p. 84). Marie de Gournay, a young woman who adores Montaigne and comes to have the status of his adopted daughter, becomes Montaigne's editor. It is noteworthy that he does not seem to reciprocate the adoration by recognizing her own more than competent work as a writer (see Wilson & Warnke, 1989 for biographical note). It is noteworthy as well that the focus of much of her writing is on the theme of *women's equality with men*. I have to remind myself that this is four centuries ago.

"Our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them," says Montaigne of his friendship with a man. His descriptions of friendship with a man *versus* marriage are quite uncannily the obverse of a more contemporary account. It is now *male friendships* that are described in terms of circumscription and circumspection. Many men today would describe marriage as more "intimate" than friendship. Psychological and self-help discourses now highlight the need for "space" between, for each person to have a clear sense of their own identity and inviolable sovereignty in a relation of intimacy, though it is not so long ago that marriage vows enjoined the two to become one soul that "mingles and blends," to misappropriate Montaigne's words.

O'Neill intervenes in my musings to remind us of Montaigne's bigger project:

> Montaigne was no solipsist. He discovered himself in his life with others, in his family, his estate, and political relations, no less than in books and the conversation of minds' past. His friendship with La Boétie was not a simple intimacy. *It represented to him an Aristotelian ideal of independence and union by which all social and political relations stood to be tested.* (O'Neill, 1982, p. 158)

If Montaigne cannot fairly be read anachronistically, neither can he be read literally: "Just as the 'Essays' are the work of a friend, or rather a work between friends, *they are themselves the generative place of Montaigne's own friendship with his readers*. Hence they do not offer idle reading, and are not reached through their surfaces" (O'Neill, 1982, p. 19) . Life for Montaigne is, to the very end, in-process-- an essay. "*His truth is the mediacy of selfhood*" (Rider,1973, p. 102).

I am startled again to recognize in Montaigne's reflexivity and the contingency of his self-making the dilemmas of postmodernity. Perhaps Montaigne is the first postmodernist.

Cogito, ergo sum.

Many of us will be familiar with the story of René Descartes' epiphany in the little poêle in Ulm, Germany in the winter of 1619. The essence of it is captured in the famous aphorism *cogito, ergo sum.* It is the stuff of legend (see Vrooman, 1970 for biographical notes). We can easily imagine Descartes' excitement as he essays his thinking process, barely noticing perhaps that the little stove is in need of more wood, barely noticing the "people in cloaks" who pass on the little street below. His essays are a marvel of clarity, as he no doubt intends. He, like Montaigne, wants us to believe he is a humble man, a man open to many possibilities:

> For myself, I have never presumed that my mind was in any respect more perfect than anyone else's. In fact, I have often longed to have as quick a wit or as precise and distinct an imagination or as full and responsive a memory as certain other people.... Thus my purpose here is not to teach the method that everyone ought to follow in order to conduct his reason correctly, but merely to show how I have tried to conduct mine.... But, putting forward this essay as merely a history--or, if you prefer, a fable--in which, among the examples one can imitate, one also finds perhaps several others which one is right in not following, I hope that the essay will be useful to some, while harmful to none, and that my openness will be to everyone's liking. (Descartes, 1980, pp. 1-2)

We can be quite sure that he does not really intend that we take his essay as "fable" or the custom of common men. The essence of life is not what it appears--mere custom or fable would not be trusted: "*I learned to believe nothing very firmly concerning what I had been persuaded to believe only by example and custom*; and thus I gradually freed myself from many errors that can darken our natural light and render us less able to listen to reason" (pp. 4-6). How, then, is one to know "truth":

> I believed that the following four rules [of logic] would be sufficient, provided I made a firm and constant resolution not even once to fail to observe them:
>
> > 1. The first was never to accept anything as true that I did not know evidently to be so.
> >
> > 2. The second, to divide each of the difficulties I was examining into as many parts as possible and as required to solve them best.

> 3. The third, to conduct my thoughts in an orderly fashion, commencing with the simplest and easiest to know objects.
> 4. And last, everywhere to make enumerations so complete and reviews so general that I would be sure of having omitted nothing. (p. 10)

> And noticing this truth-- *I think, therefore I am*-- was so firm and so certain that the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were unable to shake it, I judged that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.... Thus this 'I,' that is, the soul through which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, and even if there were no body, the soul would not cease to be all that it is. (pp. 17-18)

Cogito, ergo sum. I think, therefore I am. The world may not have quaked in 1619 in the moment of one man's insight, but we continue to be affected by it today. I tremble as I read his words. Gender politics are evident enough by what Descartes does not say in his essays (on a contemporary anachronistic reading) but such discourse has not been invented yet in Descartes' time. The discourse about male hegemony has not been invented yet either. And yet, for all that he does *not* say about men and manhood, who can doubt that Descartes constructs a powerful and lasting way of being for men *qua men:* the sovereign thinking Self; a self triumphant over things material, the body, feeling, and perhaps even God. It is a self certain of what it is, a self that has arrived--hardly a Montaignean self in process.

Woman, on Descartes' account, is more absent than oppressed or vilified, but that may amount to the same thing in the end. He might counter, "One of my best friends is a woman." Much of the power of Descartes' words for me lies in my struggle to connect the famous aphorism and its profound impacts with a place, a family. I want to know more about what those words mean to Descartes as a *man*, a man-in-relation to his world and time. We do know something of Descartes as Renaissance man with far-ranging interests in medicine, mathematics, and philosophy. We know the legend of the little poêle above the street, the little stove that he perhaps forgets to stoke with wood in the intensity of his thought. We know little of his liaison with Helen, the Dutch serving girl, and of his feelings for their daughter Francine who dies of the pox in 1640. We know next to nothing of the mundanities of his everyday life in Ulm, or anywhere. We know him only by his very big ideas.

Painting the self.

Rembrandt paints my little *Self Portrait* in Leiden about 1628, when he is but 22. The reproduction is the gift of a man also from Holland, a man I have only the briefest opportunity to know. He goes to considerable trouble to find it just because I show interest in it. I find this quite a remarkable gesture, and it has come to represent to me something about the core of goodness and generosity that is manhood. This self-portrait, or should I say all of Rembrandt's many self-portraits, viewed chronologically, constitute quite a remarkable "essay" about a man, a selfhood unfolding, manhood in a particular time. O'Neill says:

> [The self-portraits] *stand as a continuous exploration of the bodily experience of time, of the accumulation of things, of the body's ability to suffer illusion, to wear on towards death while returning its question through the very look that animates the self-portrait*.... I think that Rembrandt, like Montaigne, may have discovered that the self-portrait can only recover the alienation of the self's appearance to others by means of setting up its own bodily theatre through which there is a continuous subversion of the idea that others are free to make of us..... *The self can only consist of a daily improvisation*. (pp. 179-180)

Rembrandt does indeed set up "bodily theatre." I ask my reader's indulgence in accompanying me on a little trip back in time to visit Rembrandt in his Leiden studio. Rembrandt (see Chapman, 1990 & Pescio, 1995 for biographical notes) might nod as I come with my interpreter into the studio that he shares with another portrait painter. He does not yet have students. He is intently gazing into his prized Venetian mirror, turning his head this way and that to catch the light just right. His eyes are in shadow, and he seems to want them that way. He captures the sunlight perfectly in the highlights of his frizzy hair. He is not wearing the outrageous hat and ornate armor that he is already beginning to be known for, though there are bits of such stuff all over the studio. It is perhaps a good thing, for we are more likely to see the "real" Rembrandt in the painting if he is unadorned. The Venetian mirror is only his beginning point in a subversion/sub-version of self for the viewer's edification. If it works, though, it is perhaps precisely because we *think* his painting is a faithful reproduction of the artist.

I have been told that Rembrandt, and other men, are inventing an important new genre, a genre that transcends painting, or writing. But at the moment he is just painting, experimenting with techniques to capture light and shade. He is also muttering about when he will get his next portrait commission so he can pay his creditors. He says something about wanting to be free. He seems to think that he is merely "discovering" what already exists--his self, its place in the world beyond the studio, painting techniques--but from the vantage-point of hindsight I could tell him what a profound *invention* it will be. Rembrandt does not invent the idea of self-portrait, but he creates something new with it... The Reflexive Self.

Rembrandt would not understand such strange talk from the future. It is anachronistically clear that this little self-portrait has a particular quality that is new in its time, something that takes us beyond a likeness. Rembrandt is surely not churning out a little sidewalk likeness. He has a project, an agenda. The darkened eyes and mouth are enigmatic, speaking of a young man/self of depth and complexity, layers. The Renaissance sun that illuminates his face is profoundly generative, promising layers of character and culture yet to discover and unfold. It is generative of him as a man; generative of new possibilities for his manhood, manhood generally, perhaps selfhood generally. We imagine that Rembrandt is deep in thought, conjuring up many possibilities that he is not ready to share with his viewers just yet. Perhaps he is not ready even to face those possibilities himself. Or perhaps his time is not ready to permit him to do so. He promises more, though, if we will stick with him for awhile. He will paint many more self-portraits-- surely we will see the "real" Rembrandt in time. But of course each *is* neither more nor less real, for taken together they are a generative account of a self moving on.

Levering (in van Manen & Levering, 1996), drawing upon Mollenhauer's work, refers to the shaded eyes in terms of "separation between the private and the public sphere" (p. 122). If only we could just get a little more "intimate" with the subject/object of the painting. *We are drawn in, we want to get closer, more intimate with this powerful young man who is looking at us, his viewers.* The look is unsettling, for as viewing subjects we become objects, even four centuries later. As viewers and also objects of his enigmatic look, we are perhaps meant to wonder not only about the "real" Rembrandt, how he sees his-self and his agency, how he would see us--but also about how we see our own "real" selves and our agency. This separation of inner from outer self ("I" from "me," as Levering puts it) is a new concept in the Renaissance; one that is to have enormous importance in the modern era.

If what the self-portrait evokes were only about more than one talented young man of a particular time who will become very famous; or the promise of seeing more of him, his desires, his passions, his meanings, or the excitement of learning more of the time and place in which he lives, the power of the painting would not be so palpable to us almost four centuries later. He paints something of the *conditio humane*, even today. Rembrandt, though he perhaps cannot know it, paints for a viewer in the same generative sense as Montaigne writes for a reader. But we cannot be a passive audience. We become, whether we might wish to or not, *involved* in their projects. It is not only Rembrandt who sees his-self in his Venetian mirror. He and the other Renaissance men bring us to a new kind of reflexivity. And, whether they can envision it or not, they are inventing new possibilities for manhood.

Rembrandt does achieve some measure of fame in his lifetime. But like most innovators, he is appreciated more with the passage of time. His contemporaries are apt to think more of his eccentricity, his chronic financial problems, his unmarried and thus "immoral" relationship with Hendrickje after Saskia's death.. Tragically, he loses everything he owns to the bankruptcy auction. His estate is insufficient even to pay the ongoing rent on his burial crypt, so his remains today lie in relative oblivion. His real legacy remains, though: "Rembrandt is supposed to have said, 'If I want to give my mind diversion, then it is not honor I seek, but freedom.' He had indeed found freedom. In his quest for autonomy he had invented a new idea of the artist as an independent, self-governing individual" (Chapman, 1990, p. 137).

Nineteenth Century Manhoods

Manliness and morality.

Gender, though it will not be named or nameable until much later, is still a matter of great concern for all of the earlier societies I choose to essay (or should I say it seems to be a matter of great concern for *men* in those societies). Manhood always puts itself in the center; working hard all the while to avoid the glare of the spotlight on its more problematic aspects. If any time period after the Renaissance can be said to be particularly seminal in the formation of gender ideologies, though, it is the Victorian era. Mangan and Walvin's (1987) book, *Manliness and Morality*, captures the essence of the "cult of manliness" that is such a preoccupation in Victorian Britain and America.

As I have already indicated, Richards demonstrates in the same volume that the Victorians draw upon both Greek and Medieval traditions in defining their particular senses of gender identity. But paradoxically, the cult of manhood's self-definition in the Victorian era moves backward in history from courtliness to a more Spartan view; reinforcing in a powerful way the notion that manhood is never as fixed as men of any age would likely want and claim it to be. The cult is solidified as the century progresses, though it is manifested in diverse ways:

> It would be wrong to imagine that manliness was a simple, single, coherent term linked to a single locality. *It was, in effect, a portmanteau term which embraced a variety of overlapping ideologies regionally interpreted, which changed over time and which, at specific moments, appear to be discrete, even conflicting in emphasis.* (pp. 12-13)

As always (and in remarkably enduring ways) the making of men is a political project embedded in its' time and cultural milieu. As always, it wants to deny the very politics that demands and essentializes an Other. Woman is always a candidate for Otherness, though for the Victorians the lower classes will serve similar ends: "To encourage manliness among the poor and the deprived seemed to offer an antidote to a variety of human and social problems" (p. 14).

Dijkstra (1996) documents the times in a rather more polemical fashion in his book, *Evil Sisters*. Once again we see the age-old (Eve-old) theme of Woman as source of evil. A man must always be clear about where the threat to his manliness lies; there is always a threat, and her name is Woman. Darwin comes along at a propitious moment. Victorian science may open new vistas for humanity, but it also opens new opportunities to theorize manhood in a way congenial to men's interests::

> The later nineteenth century used Darwin's discoveries to transform the scattershot gender conflicts of earlier centuries into a 'scientifically grounded' exposé of female sexuality as a source of social disruption and 'denegration.' At the opening of the [twentieth] century, biology and medicine set out to prove that nature had given *all* women a basic instinct that made them into predators, destroyers, witches--evil sisters. *Soon experts in many related fields rushed in to delineate why every woman was doomed to be a harbinger of death to the male.* (p. 3)

The influence of Darwinism and the developing sciences generally carries on unabated into the early twentieth century. It is an era of intense concern with individualism, salvation, and improvement of the Caucasian race and European culture. The view begins to emerge that women are fundamentally and evolutionally different from men; a contrast to the Medieval "one-sex" view. "*The concept of self and the concept of sharing formed an insurmountable, universal dichotomy, as fundamental as the differences between men and women*" (p. 22) says Dijkstra in capturing the thought of then-eminent and fiercely outspoken pioneer of sociology, William Sumner. Humanistic values and socialism, not to mention the beginning aspirations of some women for equality, are seen as a menace in Sumner's rants in the name of science.

But women are a menace to man in a more pressing sense in a time when manhood becomes linked directly to his "vital essence." She is after the very core of manhood, Dijkstra says in a *tour de force*:

> The man who held onto his semen could expect to see his capital grow--and capital... was the lifeblood of the evolutionary elite.... Many thought therefore that the superman of the evolutionary future would be something of a *privileged spiritual spermatophore, whose large and impressive cranial cavity would be filled with the precious grey matter of a superior brain compacted from the seminal production of a pair of well-guarded testes.* No wonder, then, that the physicians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries railed furiously against what they saw as sensual 'effeminacy' among males. Such effeminacy was clearly the melancholy result of youthful incontinence-- either of the solitary sort or in submission to the libations of a vampire woman. (p. 59)

"Privileged spiritual spermatophore"--what an amazing descriptor for manhood in any era. Science may open new vistas for humanity, but it also opens new opportunities to theorize manhood in ways congenial to men's interests. As always, it seems, the gender gymnastics work in men's favor. Can there be any positive or redeeming possibilities in such a view? Will they also prove to be his undoing in a future time when women will insist on being heard?

Rotundo (1993) says that since men and women are now fundamentally and essentially *different*, the notion of separate spheres for men and women can appear with a vengeance: "While men were expected to toil in a cruel, barbaric marketplace, *women were to maintain the moral values that kept men civilized. Thus, civilization developed female connotations*" (p. 251). Henry James puts it in no uncertain terms:

> The whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes and coddled sensibilities, which if we don't soon look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and flattest and the most pretentious that has ever been.' (from *The Bostonians*, cited in Rotundo, p. 252)

Men become gravely concerned about the dominant position of women in raising male children: in the family, in schools, and in the church. Finally, Rotundo says, women go too far: "During the last third of the nineteenth century... women attempted to change men's public habits.... [including] campaigns against a variety of masculine pastimes from fraternal lodges to boxing matches.... taverns, lodges, and brothels" (pp. 251-252). This latter incursion into the "male sphere" is too much for men, and they react by taking on anew the very qualities that they have previously been chastised for:"Greed and combativeness, selfish drive and brutish interests, a lust for power and a love of crudeness" (p. 254). Women are expected, it seems, to tame and accommodate men's "urges," but to do so in a way that does not threaten to emasculate. Women are, once again, implicated in men's construction of themselves. Where might "intimacy" be found in such a convoluted set of gender arrangements?

Overcivilized manhood.

Kimmel (1996), writing of American society at the turn of the century, shows (yet again) that the more things change, the more they stay the same. It is a time when men are being urged to focus on "companionship" in marriage, and on their role as fathers; their role as fathers to sons in particular. What will they do?

> At home... men were still men. They focussed on their wives, but they felt on surer ground with their sons. Domesticity was incorporated into the concept of manliness, as men became convinced that in order to have their sons grow up to be "manly," they should involve themselves more substantially in their childrens' upbringing. These men were perhaps not the sensitive "new men" feminist women keep hoping for; *their domestic participation was an alternative to feminism, a way to deflect and even sabotage women's advances*. (p. 160)

Separate spheres of play for boys and girls are advocated, supported by such things as gender-coding of toys and clothing. Kimmel cites a fascinating editorial from a 1919 issue of *Infants' Department*:

> There has been a great diversity of opinion on the subject, but the generally accepted rule is pink for the boy and blue for the girl. *The reason is that pink being a more decided and stronger color is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl*. (p. 160)

In 1904 Stanley Hall publishes his massive and ground-breaking tome, *Adolescence*. He advocates separate spheres for boys and girls in a very firm way; buttressed, predictably, by science and by Darwinian thinking in particular:

> 'All that rot they teach to children about the little raindrop fairies with their buckets washing down the window panes must go.... We need less sentimentality and more spanking'.... Adolescent boys should be recognized as being in a 'hoodlum stage' of development, 'young barbarians' to be relinquished by mother into the care of the father. 'Never has the American boy been quite so wild as now, and never in the world have so many young cubs been so half-orphaned and left to female guidance in school, home, and church'.... Adolescent male rebellion is necessary and vital, the 'natural revolution of the young male just beginning to sense his virility against the *prim pedagogue propriety of petticoat control to which he has been too much committed.*' (citing Hall in Kimmel, 1996, p. 163)

Rediscovering boyhood.

In the name of subverting the "overcivilation" of domestic life and reasserting their right to create male preserves, men conveniently rediscover boyhood as the century closes:

> *Boyhood was glorified, boys' vices suddenly became men's virtues, and the two phases of life developed a more natural connection to one another*. Men embraced boyhood at the same time that they were learning to value savagery, passion, and the embodied manhood of the athlete and the soldier.... In the process, another crucial image changed. For the upgrading of boyhood contrasted with the downgrading of adult manhood.... These men were doing more than complaining about manhood. They intended to reform it, to rid it of its pomposity. They proposed to do this with massive infusions of boyishness.... *The child would be the savior of the man*. (Rotundo, 1993, pp. 256-257)

It is tempting to see this rediscovery of boyhood as a good thing in that it will enhance the intimacy of fathers and their children, and bring men more in touch with what we now call the "inner child." It is tempting, but we should be cautious in drawing such conclusions. The rediscovery has a tone of desperation and a clear sense of an appropriation of boyhood. More importantly, perhaps, it reflects a splitting off and renunciation of what is important and good about being an adult male. To "return" to boyhood could not bode well for men's relationships with women, or anyone (*including boys)*.

But the split continues nonetheless. "Rather than watch the sources of manliness stifled in boyhood, men devised new institutions to nurture and protect male impulse in the boy" (p. 259). It is the heyday of the boarding school, compulsory education with a clear path of ascent for boys as they become men, group programs such as the Boy Scouts and YMCA, adult-directed extracurricular activity:

> With men seeking to preserve the boy inside them, with boys cultivating their manly qualities, and with the elders relating to youngsters as peers, the notions of boyhood and manhood were converging. The two stages of life had not entirely dissolved into one another, but they were now seen as different phases in the *unfolding of the very same male essence*. (p. 259)

Men see themselves "unfolding" as nature and God intend. They must at all costs preserve their vital essence, for "a man with feminine qualities was bound to face difficulties" (p. 263). There are difficulties indeed, for as in any time there are those who do not fit the norm. What will men do?

Policing the borders.

What men will do is quite predictable: the "gentle feminine types" of manhood inevitably face a showdown with the "hardy masculine types." The borders of masculinity must at all costs be maintained. Rotundo (1993) documents the showdown:

> 'The gentle, restrained male--and the array of symbolic forces that created him--were a threat to civilization, if not to the progress of evolution itself'.... Hall marked off separate tracks for male and female development. It was in tracing these two separate courses that he came to focus on the effeminate male and the manly male. (p. 269)

Uniting Darwin's theories with the newly-minted disciplines of psychology and sociology institutes new hegemonic power. A crisis ensues:

> As *gendered terms of contempt switched.... from simile [like woman] to metaphor [is woman], the locus of a man's femininity shifted from external to internal, from likeness to identity....* At the historical moment when women seemed ready to break down the barriers between separate spheres, men were trying to redraw the lines of manly and womanly traits within the ranks of their own sex. To do this at a time when men seemed acutely aware of 'the woman within' created painful problems. (p. 273).

Painful problems indeed. We should not be surprised to note that a new discourse evolves to pathologize the *invert*, what is seen at the time as "the soul of a woman in the body of a man" (p. 274). *Homosexuality* moves from sodomy, a catch-phrase for many "unnatural acts," to being a matter of personal identity. With the shift comes an intensified condemnation, a condemnation that not incidentally will serve well to preserve conventional manhood. The shift is not about the subject position of "homosexual" (this recognition will have to wait for many more decades) but about the man who feels the desperate need to objectify and distance from unacceptable parts of himself :

> This new definition was about more than homoeroticism-- it was about a need to *create a category of person who could represent men's unacceptable feminine impulses*.... The effeminate provided a negative referent for the new masculinity, with its heavy emphasis on the physical marks of manliness . . . . The creation of the homosexual image produced a deadly new weapon for maintaining the boundaries of manhood. (pp. 278-179)

Segal (1990) paints a clear picture of the pathologizing of homosexuality in this time, in a chapter of her book aptly subtitled, *Traitors to the Cause:*

> For over a hundred years now scientific and popular belief has held that male homosexuality derives from and expresses something 'feminine' in men--the absence of appropriate levels of masculinity.... 'The homosexual' as a type of *person* was literally invented in Western thought only in the late nineteenth century. First used by the Hungarian writer and translator Karoly Maria Benkert... in 1869; the term entered English currency in the 1890's when it was taken up by Havelock Ellis in his pioneering studies and classification of varieties of human sexual experience. Before that, attention focused simply on 'same-sex' *behavior*.... In Foucault's famous epigram: '*The sodomite had been a temporary aberration: the homosexual was now a species*.' (pp. 135-136)

The borders must be policed, it seems, even when the lines of identity and behavior are anything but clear:

> For male homosexual behavior, [social] expectations involve an anticipated general effeminacy, sexual desire exclusively for men, and sexual desire aroused in all encounters with any men--but particularly boys and young men. And yet it is easy to point to times and places, ancient and modern, where homosexual desire accompanies conventional manliness, heterosexual desire, and very specific relations restricted to particular men. (p. 137)

Homosexuality is now, it seems, not so much a matter of morality (if it ever was) as much as it is a matter of regulating desire and denying men's fears in the name of social stability. Sedgewick's (1985) work is germinal here. Earlier, I cite her well-known epigram about the "always-already-crossed line," and Neve's comment on "women as currency." Men must carefully avoid making explicit the already implicit male homosocial desire, the potentially erotic, in their homosocial relations. Homosexuality, she says, is demonized in the service of *power*: "What modern European-style homophobia delineates is thus a space, and perhaps a mechanism, of domination, rather than the agency or motivation or political thrust of that domination.... The domination... is not only over a minority population, *but over the bonds that structure all social form*" (p. 89). How is such a space to be maintained and policed? Sedgwick says the society needs "a disproportionate leverage over the channels of bonding between all pairs of men" (p. 89). What better leverage than homosexual "blackmailability" through homophobia; an echo of the Panopticon: "Not only must homosexual men be unable to ascertain whether they are to be the objects of 'random' homophobic violence, but *no man must be able to ascertain that he is not... homosexual* (p. 89). There are, then, "important correspondences between the most sanctioned forms of male-homosocial bonding, and the most reprobated expressions of male homosexual sociality" (p. 89). Men must always be on their guard.

Her project, Sedgwick would say, is not fundamentally about homosexuality, nor about promoting homosexual identities as some would want to read her. "The schism in the male homosocial spectrum created by homophobia was *a schism based on minimal difference*" (p.202). Lynne Segal (1990) captures succinctly the dilemma for intimacy between men: "*Homophobia was the chief weapon against too great an intimacy in male friendships*"(p. 139). The schism, however illusory its foundations, is desperately needed. On a side note, it strikes me that the issue may have evolved today to one more explicitly about homosexuality: men who identify themselves, who "come out" and name the line for what it is, seem at pains to stake out particular identity positions and signifiers for themselves; a space of *more* difference and sometimes a parody or pastiche of it.

It is evident on this account that men can only be intimate with men (whether in an explicitly sexual sense or not is perhaps entirely irrelevant) at a risk, and by invoking women. Levi-Strauss' writes of marriage as a "relationship of exchange" between *men*. Women, on this view, are objects or currency, not partners in the exchange:

> 'The erotic triangle [is, then] not... an ahistorical, Platonic form from which the historical accidents of gender, language, class, and power detract, but... a sensitive register precisely

> for delineating relationships of power and meaning, and for making graphically intelligible the play of desire and identification by which individuals negotiate with their societies for empowerment.' (Cited in Sedgwick, 1985, pp. 26-27)

Male-male intimacy is a risk in terms of the homosexual valence attached in a homophobic society. Even when women are not explicitly invoked, men find ways to define their relations with men in instrumental terms and as a parallel relation. Business is business, after all--keep your eyes ahead on the mutual goal. If, as Sedgwick suggests, man is ever-vigilant about the "line" and about power, what then of his "intimacy" with woman? Woman may be excluded in important ways from relation even in the name of romantic love and chivalry (women will be familiar with this suggestion; men will be baffled by it). She may be "currency," but she is also perceived as a source of power. To be intimate with Other, but particularly with woman, is to risk transformation. In an important sense, "power" (at least as men define it) and intimacy stand in dialectical relation, whether it is intimacy between men and men, or men and women. The old cowboy song, "Don't Fence Me In," is perhaps only nominally about the open range.

For man, then, it seems of vital importance to define themselves in terms of what they most assuredly (or most fearfully) are *not*: not woman, not homosexual. On that account, he owes women and homosexuals a monumental debt. Edwards (1994) argues that male homosexuality is also in debt to male heterosexuality:

> *For some gay men, their gayness is a way to challenge masculinity*, personally, through nonconformity to certain roles and identities and, politically, in an adoption of a different social-structural position, particularly in relation to women; whilst *for other gay men, their gayness is simply sexual*, having sex with other men whilst in all other respects retaining a traditional masculine identity, set of activities and socio-structural position in society. (Edwards, 1994, p. 46)

We have moved a long way, it seems, from Benkert's 1869 "invention" of a unidimensional Modern discourse of male homosexuality as effeminacy or inversion. There are many homosexualities, even many sites of homosexual identity, as Edwards' point might suggest. There are many crossings, too, of Sedgwick's "line," though few may be acknowledged. Each denial has its costs.

Fit to be a man.

One of the strongest themes in the construction of Victorian manhood as identified by Park (1987) is that of health, body and athletics: "It was widely held that mind was the seat of the `will' and that 'will' performed a decisive role in the formation of 'character'.... By strengthening the body one could also strengthen the will. Responsibility... was largely an individual matter. However, since the individual was part of the social whole, the two were clearly linked" (pp. 18-19). As I have already noted, the Victorian era is a time of burgeoning interest in matters scientific. Men are anxious to appropriate this new knowledge to their purposes. The interest in the science of bodily functions leads to the notion of a link between muscle power and mind power. The male athletic body becomes iconic, the site, Victor Turner says, of "a type of 'cultural performance' in which social dramas may be powerfully enacted" (cited in Park, p. 21). By 1900, men have discovered "body," and have placed it clearly in the center of their notions of manhood. It is, of course, still a Cartesian body; a body under the control of the mind, an instrumental body ready at all times to do the bidding of its master. Such is to be an enduring theme.

The (quint)essentially male and fit body becomes a Christian one later in the century. As Kimmel (1996) shows, the *Muscular Christianity* movement, initiated in the early Victorian era by British novelist Charles Kingsley, becomes an influential focus for manhood. Men move to reclaim the feminized home and the feminized church: "Enter Muscular Christianity--a religious movement designed to bring manliness in its various manifestations to church and to keep it awake when it got there" (pp. 176-177). We should not be surprised that Christ's androgynous body is appropriated by men and re-envisioned in a form more congruent with their interests:

> In the Muscular Christian iconography, Jesus had dark hair, calloused [working class] hands, and a well-developed physique. Gone was the sad, sweet man with flowing robes and pacific gaze. And gone was the image of the religious life as sedentary and feminizing. Muscular Christians looked for the 'exacting masculine pages of their Bible,' the study of which was 'worthy of the best time and mightiest effort of the manliest man,' writes the historian Gail Bederman. Bible study 'produces a virility, a ruggedness of character, an altruistic spirit, a hopeful temper, a power of patience and endurance, a fearlessness, a stability of manhood that nothing else gives.' (pp. 178-179)

Twentieth-Century Man

Stephe's character factory.

Robert Baden-Powell (see Jeal, 1989, for biographical notes) must be ranked as one of the more important figures in the construction of early twentieth-century manhood. Baden-Powell is dubbed *B-P: Chief Scout of the World* at the first international Scout Jamboree in 1920. His intimates know him as Stephe; his movement becomes known as "Stephe's Character Factory." His handbook, *Scouting for Boys,* first published in 1908, is aptly sub-titled *A Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship*. "I was a boy once...." the evocative tale begins. The *Handbook* is written in the form of *Camp Fire Yarns,* each a deepening of Baden-Powell's personal narratives-with-a-moral. Here are some of the images Baden-Powell creates for boys in 1908:

- A scout in the army, as you know, is generally a soldier who is chosen for his cleverness and pluck to go out in front to find out where the enemy is, and report to the commander all about him. But, besides war scouts, there are also peace scouts-- men who in peace time carry out work which requires the same kind of pluck and resourcefulness. These are the frontiersmen of the world. The pioneers and trappers of North and South America, the hunters of Central Africa, the explorers and missionaries in all parts of the world, the Bushmen and drovers of Australia-- all these are peace scouts, real *men* in every sense of the word, and good at scoutcraft. They understand how to live out in the jungle.

- The Knight's patrol used to stick to him through thick and thin, and all carried out the same idea as their leader-- namely: Their honor was sacred. They were loyal to God, their king, and their country. They were particularly courteous and polite to all women and children, and weak people. They were helpful to everybody. They gave money and food where it was needed, and saved up their money to do so. They taught themselves the use of arms to protect their religion and their country against enemies. They kept themselves strong and healthy and active to be able to do these things well. You Scouts cannot do better than follow the example of the Knights

- A Scout should sleep much in the open.... The thing is always to sleep with your windows open, summer and winter, and you will not catch cold.... Every real Scout takes a bath whenever it is possible. If he cannot get a bath, he takes a good rubdown daily with a wet rough towel. Scouts breathe through the nose, not the mouth. In this way they don't get thirsty. They don't get out of breath so quickly. They don't breathe all sorts of germs that are in the air, and they don't snore at night.

- When a [Zulu] boy was old enough to become a warrior, he was stripped of his clothing and painted white all over. He was given a shield with which to protect himself and an assegai or small spear for killing animals or enemies. He was then turned loose in the "bush." If anyone saw him while he was still white he would hunt him and kill him.... For a month the boy had to hide away in the jungle, and live the best he could.... In South America the boys of the Yaghan tribe-- down in the cold, rainy regions of Patagonia-- also undergo a test of pluck before they are allowed to consider themselves men. For this test the boy must drive a spear deep into his thigh and smile all the time in spite of the pain. It is a cruel test, but it shows that those savages understood how necessary it is that boys should be trained to manliness and not be allowed to drift into being poor-spirited wasters who can only look on at man's work. If every boy works hard at Scouting he will, at the end of it, have some claim to call himself a Scout and a man, and will find that he will have no difficulty in looking after himself.

- In being charitable, be careful that you do not fall into the mistake of false charity. That is to say, it is very easy and comforting to you to give a penny to a beggar in the street, but you ought not to do it. That beggar in ninety-nine times out of a hundred is an arrant old fraud, and by giving your penny you are encouraging him and others to go on with that trade. There may be, probably are, hundreds of really poor and miserable people hiding away, whom you never see and to whom that penny would be a godsend. The charity organizations know where they are and who they are, and if you give your penny to them they will put it into the right hands for you.

What an engaging essay is this *Handbook*-- its messages are spelled out in bold, if simplistic, relief. It is unquestionably an immensely creative vision forged of Baden-Powell's personal experience, but it is also a vision thoroughly rooted in its time and what can be said and thought by a man of his social station. Its genius is to promote an captivating vision of individuality, independence, and "pluck" that dovetails perfectly with the concerns and needs of the dominant society. It is really about becoming a certain *kind* of man needed by post-Victorian England between wars: a grown-up Scout, a kindly and chivalric man who does good deeds and looks after those weaker than himself, a man healthy in body and spirit; but a man also sure of his central place as a Caucasian male in the Empire and the world, a man ready to do his duty for his country in war or peace.

Baden-Powell promotes a soft-edged though clearly heterosexual and unitary manhood. He may draw upon certain exotic teachings about men of color in the colonies, but he is very clear that such men are Other. Individuality is a strongly stated goal; an individuality rooted in obedience to adult leadership, to nationalistic identity and security. The work ethic is alive and well in this individuality. One is not only to work hard, but to do so cheerfully. Stephe promotes the idea of charity, but not a "false charity." At first this may seem a curiously uncharitable thought in an otherwise positive account. To fully understand it we have to put it in the context of a society concerned about social order: "Baden-Powell shared with much of the British ruling class a growing alarm at the loss of social control, widening class divisions, and waning imperial power. As soon as he revealed his plans to solve social and political problems by raising hardy, disciplined boys, he won enthusiastic establishment support" (MacLeod, 1983, p. 136).

If Baden-Powell's campfire yarns were no more than one man's personal narratives or his way of working out his own life issues, he would be unknown today. He writes with apparent modesty in 1908 what ordinary--that is, middle and lower middle class--boys want to hear, but also what the male establishment wants to hear. The movement is never to make a dent on the "lower classes" of urban boys about which there is such consternation at the time. He is far from a scholar, though he might like to be. He eschews homage to the institutional church.

Who is Stephe as a man? He is born in 1857 to Henrietta and Baden Powell. Baden is much older than Henrietta, having been twice widowed and bringing four children to the third marriage. Henrietta quickly dispatches the step-children to live with relatives. She gives birth to 10 more children, three of whom die in 1855-56. Stephe is eighth, growing up under the influence of four older brothers. Baden, a lecturer in theology at Oxford and an aspiring scientist, dies in the midst of a futile campaign to bring the upstart Charles Darwin's new theories to his theological college. Stephe is just three. His mother is unavailable to the little boy, having many responsibilities to cope with as well as the grief for the loss of her husband.

Stephe is to experience many struggles in "finding" a father, dealing with his mothers expectations, and finding a wife for himself (there is considerable conjecture about his sexual orientation). The manhood he seeks and then advocates is by no means a hard-edged or blatantly misogynist manhood, but a manhood leery of woman's power and influence. It is perhaps Stephe's advocacy of "getting away" from life in the town and back to a more primeval nature that probably appeals first to boys of the time. But getting away from the controlling clutches of mothers, women, and girls is an unmistakably strong undercurrent that is also likely to appeal. It is interesting to note that he will always insist that the Girl Guide movement be clearly separated from the Boy Scout movement, though that will not deter him from trying to control both. One *must* resist the temptation to take him to task (anachronistically) on his ethnocentrism, his imperialism, his sexism, his militaristic viewpoint. One must, but I say it nonetheless.

All in all, the manhood Stephe so passionately commends to "his" boys is a gentle and a very caring one and remains so to this day. How would such a manhood, rooted in concerns about helping out people in need but also about getting away from girls and women, speak to intimacy today? Stephe's scout/frontiersman mythology may still live in the hearts of men, but he must today take some account of heightened gender sensitivities, concern with the risk of sexual abuse of children and youth by adults in positions of trust, dispersion in preferred identities. There is no longer space to get away, though we see some scary political movements that desperately try to do just that. Robert Bly and others will try to resurrect the frontiersman. We will have to wait to see his fate.

Manhood at mid-century.

> And as a guy develops and practices his masculinity, he is accompanied and critiqued by an invisible male chorus of all the other guys, who hiss or cheer as he attempts to approximate the masculine ideal, who push him to sacrifice more and more of his humanity for the sake of his masculinity, and who ridicule him when he holds back. The chorus is made up of all the guy's comrades and rivals, all his buddies and bosses, his male ancestors and his male cultural heroes, his models of masculinity- and above all his father, who may have been a real person in the boy's life, or may have existed for him only as the myth of the man who got away. (Pittman, 1990, p. 42)

Surely a man's sense of his own masculinity begins with his birth into a family as a male, but it is deeply embedded in and formed out of social constructions and thus in language. For men, masculinity seems to be profoundly linked to certain cultural narratives. The cultural narratives of manhood after World War II are painted in bold relief for all to see. Pittman doesn't write specifically of that era, but his image of the "male chorus" seems a poignantly 50's one. For all that, I wonder if the rules for manhood are really much more clear today? Is the cardinal rule--manhood as the *not feminine*--still extant?

The very advent of television opens the potential for new portrayals of gender. It is amusing now to recall the intense controversies over how Elvis Presley and the Beatles would be allowed to represent manhood on the *Ed Sullivan Show*--pelvic thrusts and long hair are very threatening to hegemonic manhood, it seems. They would be considered laughably tame today. Of course, "manhood" is not mentioned; it is only "public decency" that we are worried about. Man's body may not yet be put under the glare of the spotlight. Robert Young, whose death at the age of ninety-one is announced as I write, becomes somewhat of an icon for fatherhood in his 1950's television series, *Father Knows Best*. His character epitomizes the idealized state of fatherhood of the time perhaps: kindly, involved, all-knowing, softly patriarchal.

The cult classic, *Rebel Without a Cause,* provides altogether more provocative models of fatherhood and manhood. Dean's character, Jim, portrays the *angst* of '50's adolescents and the complexities of male identity formation. Jim walks a line between the requisite toughness and a caring vulnerability. He is able to be a nurturing and loyal figure to his friends and yet a strong advocate for a less hypocritical family/society. His mother is very domineering to the point of caricature. The scene where Jim confronts his weak father dressed in an apron is a memorable one, and a rather radical one for the time. James Neibur (1989) notes in his commentary on films of the era that many studies identify a theme of latent homosexuality between Jim and his younger acolyte, Plato (Sal Mineo). Neibur concludes that the relationship is rather a "Testament to male bonding.... That Jim Stark was heterosexual is what makes Dean's contribution to the struggle against sex role stereotyping in the American cinema so substantial" (p. 183). And, of course, we have the requisite young woman (Judy) to serve as a sign that the "already crossed" line need not be exposed.

It is 1969, and I am in the Family class of my social work graduate program. The professor, addressing us as "ladies and gentlemen," seems to be in a rare mood of passion about his topic for the day: sex(sic) roles in the family. He makes a case for helping our clients to clearly separate instrumental leadership roles (for men) and expressive roles (for women). He quotes the then "hot" sociologist Talcott Parsons along with Erik Erikson in support of his argument. There is an unquestioning silence at this point about what this might mean for concrete work with men, fathers, and boys; but there is no doubt left about this being a most important issue. He says that fathers should be encouraged to take their "proper" instrumental role as heads of the household. He and the textbooks have already had a *great deal* to say about inadequate mothering. Not one of the 50 men and women in the class seem inclined to question the professor's position or what it might mean. Shortly after that, we graduate and head out into the world to "help" families.

The core qualifications for such fathers are simple enough: he must have a penis and stand tall, and he must be "normal" (heterosexual) and decisive. Beyond that, little seems to be expected. This pre-feminist, largely Freudian scholarship on fathers and masculinity lets men as men and particularly as fathers off the hook by its support of their instrumental and authoritative role and privilege, and its neglect of emotions. The discourses of the time (Erikson's work notwithstanding) are much less about intimacy than about providing role models for children--male children in particular. The silence about men as whole persons who might have more diverse contributions (including that of emotion and nurture) to make to the socialization of their children is, in contemporary context, quite shocking. Fathers are to be the instrumental leaders and authorities in the family in order to provide proper figures for their sons to identify with. Failing that, boys must be given access to male figures with whom they would presumably identify. There is little discussion at all of the relationship of fathers with their daughters. There is virtually no discussion of abuse and violence.

By 1981, Joseph Pleck concludes his important career-long study of what he calls this "male sex role identity paradigm"; the paradigm that supports the need for a Father though not a "present" relational one. He proposes, in its place, a social-psychological theory of *sex role strain* that puts traditional static, unitary, and essentialist notions of sex (*sic*) role in question. The site of identity-formation on this model moves from external models and standards given by society, to inner processes and constructions. Pleck draws heavily upon quantitative studies to support his conclusions, so as a reader one gets little sense of the lived experience and sense-making processes of the men he studies. Though he, often writing jointly with his wife Elizabeth Pleck, is clearly pro-feminist in his approach to the question of gender; Pleck does not, at least in his early work, significantly elides the question of gendered power. He is not alone in this in terms of the thinking extant early in his career-- I think here of Talcott Parsons-- though we might expect him to incorporate something of the feminist analysis in his later writing. Pleck gives favorable consideration to the emerging notion of *androgyny* as a preferred way of being for both men and women.

The allure of androgyny/feminism.

> There are men too gentle to live among wolves / Who toss them like a lost and wounded dove / Such gentle men are lonely in a merchant's world / Unless they have gentle one to love. (James Kavanaugh, 1970, *There Are Men Too Gentle To Live Among The Wolves*)

In the late 1970's and early 1980's I find myself much involved in issues of family violence, much identified with the plight of women and children. Kavanaugh's poem represents in powerful way my feelings at the time, and I find myself quoting him often (his appeal to me at this point of my life is really more about my inchoate feelings as a man than about a carefully thought-out position). Androgyny and feminism appeal at first, albeit in this rather vague sense, as effective strategies to circumvent male power and a male identity linked to hegemony, and to empower the feminine from within. It seems reasonable at the time to blame men for many ills and to advocate a softer gentler manhood, a more feminine-centered approach to life. I embrace such gentleness, androgyny, and feminism without distinguishing them from one another, indeed without theorizing at all. They serve important purposes for me that will become clear only in hindsight. I am on a crusade, determined to be one of the "good guys" who, in joining the feminist cause, will somehow make it all better for women and children. I cannot comprehend why so few men seem willing to join the cause.

As I now look back, there are signs of unease that I cannot listen to in the midst of the crusade. I come to understand, in retrospect, what I am after in my crusade: to separate and distance myself from hegemonic manhood, and yet to find a comfortable sense of my own identity and sexuality; to empower and valorize my identity as a "gentle and caring man who likes to cook and do artistic things"; to create a space as a man wherein I can work with issues that would otherwise be daunting for me, that is, to place myself on the side of good and right; to create a space, in particular, where I can work out gender issues of power, aggression and violence; and to deal with my pain as a man. The crusade is really an inner one, it seems; a way around the wounded and confused part of me that I am not yet ready to face. I can "help" Other while denying the complex and problematic aspects of Self.

It seems natural at the time to conflate androgyny as more of a personal identity position and feminism as more of a political stance. It seems natural to deal with (actually to deny) the demands and oppressiveness of a dominant manhood on men by identifying with the very different oppression of women and children. And it seems natural to set aside the imperative of men doing men's work by appropriating women's work. My first awareness of the problematics comes when the directorship of the women's shelter where I am interning changes, and the new director challenges me with the question, "Why are you here"? Though we do come to an agreement that I will stay on for the time being, I stop wearing my feminist badge and don a pro-feminist one. It is the dawning of my awareness that there is man's work to be done, and that I am not immune to it.

Seidler (1990) writing from many years of involvement with the MAS (Men against Sexism) movement in Britain, and with the politics of the Left, is very helpful now as I try to make sense of my earlier experiences. He captures a central dilemma of men in feminism clearly. To say "no" to hegemonic power is also in a particular sense to say "no" to masculinity and to appropriate Woman::

> Masculinity was taken to be *essentially* oppressive to women and as being a structure of oppression. This touches something significant in sexual relationships, for it is a movement of denial that involves a self-rejection, often a loss of vitality and even sexuality.... In fact, this self-rejection is often because men have failed to explore the contradictions of their masculinity. Rather, they have learnt that masculinity is essentially a relationship of power, so that *you could only give up your power in relation to women, and so no longer collude in women's oppression, if you were prepared to 'give up' your masculinity.* (p. 16)

Given all of this personal history, reading Kari Weil's (1992) book, *Androgyny and the Denial of Difference,* is now a powerful experience for me. As her title implies, Weil's political project is to theorize *love* and the *denial of difference* through an interrogation of gender constructions of androgyny and hermaphroditism. I find her reading of the gathering at Agathon's house to discuss "love," as reported in Plato's *Symposium*, a captivating one in the sense that I am reading for the first time of some of the origins of what is to become an enduring ideology. It is important to note that wine and the flute girl are banned from this particular Symposium in order to ensure that the desiring body of man can be subjugated to spiritual love--this will be no ordinary evening of debauchery.

Socrates is at pains to remind the gathering of the important difference between the subject and the object of love. His first act is to appropriate the absent presence of Diotoma, his instructress in matters of love, by speaking her words: "It is the lover and not the beloved, Diotoma explains, who will climb the ladder of philosophy and be admitted into the mysteries of Truth and Beauty" (p. 25); the *lover* and not one of the "foolish beings" (women and youths). Socrates appropriates the "androgynous plenitude" of the male-female relation and assimilates it into "the highest of pedagogical relations, that of man to man...thus [posing] as the primal androgyne in whom (sexual) difference is transcended and with it all forms of physical desire" (p. 26). It is a clever bit of gender gymnastics: "What is excluded from this ladder is, not the feminine, but the maternal body.... *Absolute beauty, in other words, is founded upon the repression of difference and its assimilation to the same: the conversion of female to male, and flesh to spirit*" (after Brenkman, p. 26).

During the proceedings, Aristophanes retells the myth of the androgyne:

> His well known story begins with a depiction of 'man's' original nature, which was dual, consisting of two bodies united into one spherically shaped being. *thus indicating that sexual difference existed absolutely, from the beginning*. Self-sufficient in their roundness, 'with their back and sides forming a circle,' consisting of two faces, two 'privy members,' four feet and hands, each of these primal beings could walk upright or tumble with great speed. They were so mobile and mighty they 'dared to scale heaven' and rival the gods.... Jealous of the round and mighty humans, Zeus... cut each in two, thereby reducing their strength and increasing their number.... From this initial division and from the profound feeling of incompleteness that it produced, *desire and love were born, sending each of the newly created beings in search of his or her other half.* (citing Aristophanes, p. 18)

We should not be surprised at Freud's and Lacan's interest in the androgyne, or at the striking resemblance of the psychoanalytic account to the story of the Fall; for these myths admirably suit their projects to theorize the origins of subjectivity in a phallocentric fashion. They, though, attribute Woman's radical difference not to the god Zeus, but to castration. Lacan locates desire in narcissism, akin to the narcissism of the androgyne. Desire reflects a division of the male and the female as radically different, a privileging of male subjectivity and heterosexual love, and an endless (and futile) search for the Self in the Other. Lacan says: " '*The analytic experience substitutes the search by the subject, not of the sexual complement, but of the part of himself, lost forever, that is constituted by the fact that he is only a sexed living being, and that he is no longer immortal*' " (p. 6). It will be useful to try to follow the implications of such a forever lost part of the self as we return repeatedly to questions of intimacy.

"[Lacan's] term *hommelette* [the flat primal man and woman] bodies forth this joke that centers around the *impossibility* of ever knowing or describing the origin or, as Lacan adds, the organ of love" (p. 6). As the two "newly created beings" venture forth in search of self-completion, we can foresee the problem of language. Lacan will link the problem it to castration, "the sexually marked term... to refer to this state of lack that is shared by male and female subjects alike" (p. 7). Derrida, another master joker, sees the androgyne not as lack but as a culmination of "a pervasive yearning and nostalgia for a '*transcendental signified*'"(p. 10).

In an interesting turn, Weil aims to subvert such "nostalgia" by invoking an entirely different myth: that of the absent presence of the *hermaphrodite*: "To bring this other figure onto the scene of representation... is to dislodge the androgyne and the sexual, aesthetic, and racial hierarchies it establishes from the universal, revealing its givens to be constructions of patriarchal ideology and not the results of divine or natural law" (pp. 10-11). Ovid tells the Symposium another story about the nymph Salmacis' desire for Hermaphrodite:

> '[She] was on fire with passion to possess [his] naked beauty.... When their limbs met in that clinging embrace the nymph and the boy were no longer two, but a single form, possessed of a dual nature, which could not be called male or female, but seemed to be at once both and neither'.... Beginning as a story of [female] desire, Ovid's myth ends as a tale of the fall of man, a fall from clear sexual division into sexual confusion.... *At the origin of desire is, not wholeness, but an unstable and frightening confusion from which there emerges, not ideal love, but a power struggle between the sexes, each trying to establish a wholeness it never had*.... Hermaphroditus' fallen state bodies forth the always already fused and confused relation of male and female.... Not penis envy, but a delight with herself precedes [Salmacis'] desire to possess Hermaphroditus. (citing Ovid, p. 19)

I admit that I may overindulge my curiosity about the goings on at the Symposium, and about the origins of the myth of androgyne. The point is, what might each myth contribute to a more contemporary discourse about manhood, about same and different, and about intimacy? "Hermaphroditic difference" represents important silences in Freud and Lacan; the better, Weil suggests, to "disguise [Freud's] silent disavowal of his own femininity, his paranoia" (p.9). Freud, she says, will somehow "forget" the fact that there are *three* primal beings in the myth, thus pathologizing homosexual love from then on. Much is at stake here in contemporary reincarnations of the myths. Do we theorize relation in terms of an originary *wholeness*, a split (and a "cut"), and a narcissistic desire and search for reunion; a nostalgic trip down memory lane to find the lost Self in Other? Or do we see it in terms of an originary *difference* and division between the sexes, "each trying to establish a wholeness it never had"? Intimacy is apt to be a problematic in both accounts. Difference is an issue in each, but a very different issue: In Lacan's telling of the Oedipal myth, the feminine is the glaring evidence of the "cut' and of "absence" in the phallocentric and hegemonic order. In the hermaphroditic account, difference is the radical difference of male and female, struggling toward wholeness and connection.

The androgyne, then, can hardly qualify as a subversive figure and a subversion of gender, as my earlier more naive view supported by popular wisdom might have it. Unbeknownst to me, manhood has already appropriated and made a place for it. Androgyny is now, if not already, mainstream. Karen Kaivola (1997) would agree that the androgyne does not threaten or subvert hegemonic manhood. In her review of several books on gender b(l)ending she characterizes the hermaphroditic as the truly subversive: "androgyny's 'blind spot'... [taking] the form of a disruptive, perverse, chaotic force that confuses the gender distinctions constructed and preserved by patriarchal culture" (p. 200). She cites Ken Plummer's assertion that "conservative forms of gender blending [including androgyny] pose little threat to the gender order, since *they reinforce the idea of a core, authentic gender identity*.... 'Whilst anomalies of nature may happen, they can ultimately be located on one side or the other of the gender divide' (p. 205).

Androgyny can thus be seen as hegemonic manhood's straw man/woman. If such an identity can be seen as supporting hegemonic manhood through the back door, Kaivola then wonders if there are any signs of openings for "non-identities" outside of the sex/gender system. Sex-change surgery might seem to offer such openings, albeit rather radical ones, if there could be some escape from the tyrannizing discourses of the medical establishment. But it still remains very much to be seen whether getting beyond gender is possible, since "every undoing depends upon and thus reinscribes the very categories it professes to unravel" (p. 205). "*As the 20th century draws to a close, my feeling is that androgyny's subversive potential has become problematic indeed, given its absorption by corporate capitalism.... Androgyny sells*" (p. 199). Androgyny does sell. I no longer believe that it solves the problem of gender, or intimacy. Neither does it help us to theorize and live our difference.

Gender and Genius

Catherine Battersby's (1989) essay, *Gender and Genius*, is a mistressful and captivating account of men's historical writing of genius, particularly in literature and the fine arts. It is yet another documentation of what I call gender gymnastics, the travelling carnival of ideologies that support hegemonic manhood. She shows, with brilliant insight and searing wit, how women have been excluded from the *logos* of creativity and genius; centering on her own experience of being devalued as a feminist scholar of "genius." The essay is an account of great ideological leaps: man's celebration of genius as phallus as *logos spermatikos;* his appropriation of genius as the *feminine;* and then (the *coup de grâce)* his discounting and disqualifying of the very possibility of woman herself as genius. One reading might suggest that the gendering of genius is a rather unique and insignificant phenomenon. I review Battersby here because her analysis says so much about the "genius" of manhood's broader hegemonic project. There are many resonances with the androgyny project.

The process of gendering genius is accelerated by 18th century European man's efforts to answer the then-pressing question of what make him superior to animals: "The genius was *like* an animal, a primitive, a child or a woman; but of course this likeness was deceptive.... Women [were] amongst the categories counted as not-fully-human" (p. 3). The sex that is not fully human can hardly be genius: "Genius, apparently, required a penis. Indeed, the more psychically feminine genius appeared, the louder the shout that went up: 'It's a boy!.... The romantics' androgyne has male genital organs; it is only his soul that is 'feminine'" (p. 6)

We might expect Jung to affirm the possibility of woman as genius, given his thinking about psychic bisexuality. But no, it seems that he also has some gender gymnastics of his own in mind:

> Jung allows woman an inner 'masculine' self--bound up with what he calls the '*logos spermatikos*'.... He insists that a woman's creativity reaches only as far as *inspiring* a man to productive activity .... The mind of a male *benefits* from the emotion, moodiness and love that Jung associated with his inner femininity. By contrast, the masculine woman merely *parodies* the male Logos: a term that Jung glosses as 'knowledge,' 'clarifying light,' 'discrimination,' 'detachment'--with that which makes a human being a sublime and god-like creator. (pp. 7-8)

Woman, on this account, is inevitably drawn back into biological creativity. Man, on the other hand, is free to express his creative urges "out there" at the tip of the penis/Word. If the foundations of masculinity are as fragile as I often seem to suggest in this essay, how is it that manhood could appropriate precisely that of which it is most contemptuous--the feminine? Battersby answers this by arguing that it has never been the feminine that man rejects, but *femaleness*. The (male) genius becomes a better woman. Man wants to appropriate the lion's share of procreativity as his own, invoking essentialist arguments selectively to justify the claim: "*Males, it seems, can transcend their animal nature to produce culture; females cannot*" (p. 20). Creating life is a rather mundane accomplishment when set against "real" (supermale) creativity: "Genius/creativity, then, is about phallic politics: Even today the pen has been represented as a metaphorical penis.... The paintbrush and sculptor's chisel are also phallic signifiers. Renoir, for example, is alleged to have said 'that he painted his paintings with his prick.' " (citing *Madwoman*, pp. 37-39).

The struggle is always over the claim to *logos,* in its ups and downs:

> *Logos* was the formula contained within the male seed that enabled the father to reproduce his own likeness in his offspring.... *Logos spermatikos*--'the spermatic word'--was a central concept in ancient Greek and Roman stoicism.... Via Christianity, the (divine metaphysical) *genius* of male procreativity shrivelled into a (mundane, physical) penis.... The pen was used as a kind of penis-extension (to re-establish male divinity on a new non-physical level). (pp. 49-50)

Is there any way that women might aspire to occupy this space of genius appropriated by men; say, by taking on androgyny? It seems that option is not open: 'The man of genius possesses, like everything else, the complete female in himself; but woman herself is only a part of the Universe, and the part never can be the whole; *femaleness can never include genius* (citing Weininger, 1903, p. 113). Anyway, as we have already seen, the androgyne is not the gender-neutral figure we envision. Even in the androgyne, femaleness is fragmentary and secondary, while maleness is still centered and not in doubt. Man has *logos spermatikos* on his side of the gender divide.

On a theme reminiscent of McNamara's *Herrenfrage*, all of this happens in a context of profound social changes, including the ascendency of the new science in the nineteenth century. "Male supremacy would require new rationalisations--and would receive them from the new ideas of genius and the new stereotypes of female nature that were developed in the nineteenth century" (p. 73). Man has long linked "body" and "earth" to women--women are to be objects of beauty, the clay to be molded, Other, "waiting around to be written upon." But, Battersby argues, man even appropriates this very Otherness of woman when it suits his purposes: "Having been excluded from the category of the fully-human, *women find men even seeking to appropriate their status as Other*. Nineteenth-century males aspired to the demonic roles--spirit-medium, priestess, oracle, witch, lunatic, monster--that had left women with a residue of strength" (p. 111).

When the mad artist as genius takes on "demonic roles," he slips out of the mainstream, but he does not have to be disowned. Battersby makes an important distinction between *Others*, those who are "not-quite-human," (thus female); and *Outsiders,* those who are "fully human but not-quite-normal [thus male]... feminine' males, genius males, crazy males, degenerate males, shamanistic males... even pseudo-males" (p. 138). Her analysis reminds me of the axiom about children who chronically misbehave: "Better to get negative attention than none at all" (the miscreant is apt to be male, doing what boys do, remaining centered no matter what). The Outsider is quintessentially male, and thoroughly *inside* manhood.

I cannot leave Battersby's project without visiting her critique of Lacan's take on *logos* and thus, implicitly, his view of genius. "The phallus symbolizes both separation from the (M)other and the desire to re-unite with the (M)other," he says (p. 136). But the Law does not allow the reunion. The phallus becomes the prized transcendental signifier. "The Law of the Father' turns out to be that hoary (and not very venerable) grandfather of European philosophy--the *logos spermatikos*. The tedium of recognition increases as we examine Lacan's second order of psychic significance, that of the pre-linguistic (or 'imaginary') which is associated with the *féminine"* (p. 136). Even madness is gendered: "Neurosis (seen by Freud as near to 'genius') is associated with dysfunction with regard to the masculine order of symbols; psychosis, by contrast, is allied to a *féminine* form of consciousness, and the failure to develop the fiction of an autonomous ego which marks entry to the symbolic realm" (p. 136).

Lacan tries to approach the Real in his own texts by taking on the persona of the mad (though never too mad) genius, describing the texts in terms of "[feminine] *jouissance*: the extremes of feminine (sexual and mystical) ecstasy that disrupt and expose the conceits of the male ego" (p. 136). Lacan describes man at one point as an "uncompleted woman." Is he unconsciously invoking his own uncompletedness as he dabbles in feminine incoherence? Battersby would have nothing of that:

> Lacan's techniques of *seeming* to let language... speak through him--while manipulating it and his audience in a very deliberate way--should alert us to the sexual conservatism implicit in his stance..... Lacan could (safely) ally himself with a ... *féminine* form of ecstasy, because he was perceived as a (strong) male ego that would not really fragment

> into psychosis... for parading his incoherence in public. Women who act like Lacan will have difficulty in being perceived in the same way. (p. 137)

Battersby's project is to develop a feminist aesthetics that would interest itself in "*female*, not feminine, genius" (p. 10). For my purposes though, sympathetic as I am to her point--questions of women's identity are always inseparable from projects of men's identity and relation--it is important now to ask more pointedly what her essay suggests about *men* and the ways men create themselves and write/draw/act "their" world. Her account of man's gender gymnastics echoes the path of myths of the Fall and the androgyne through history. As always in a gymnastic competition, there is a winner and a loser. On a simplistic and binary reading, woman/women is the loser here. But yet again the question must be asked about what Man/men gain by an account that appropriates and subsumes--yet denies so vehemently--femaleness.

Battersby documents some excessive gender gymnastics indeed. For me one of the most useful aspects of Battersby's account are captured in the notion of the Outsider: the miscreant, the bad boy, the crazy one *who no matter what he does is not disowned by hegemonic manhood because even when he appropriates femaleness he still represents the "not feminine*." The may be bent into many shapes but he is not "cut." Woman and the Outsider share one common function in their service to hegemonic man, for He always desperately needs an Other. Does Michael Jackson undermine manhood? Does Ashley McIsaac? What needs desperately to be named is the illusory and appropriated foundation of mainstream manhood. Bodies are often the battleground, it seems, but it is precisely the body that has to be obscured and even denied in the hegemonic project .

Constructing / Deconstructing the Senses

The opening of vision.

Man's *body* as site of identity (or denial of it) has been lurking around throughout this essay. My first introduction to the theorizing of men's sensing bodies comes in reading David Levin's (1988) *The Opening of Vision*. I focus briefly here on two closely-related aspects of his argument: the male gaze, and men's inability to cry. Levin documents and links the oculocentrism of modern Man, the primacy of the totalizing gaze in manhood's construction, and contemporary nihilism; all rooted in the denial of subjectivity and meaning that is central to Cartesian subjectivity's objectification of body and world, and its development of vision as a primary social practice. The Self is beginning to fragment:

> [Today's question of transcending the fixed identity] does not bring to light a Cartesian self, a self of reason completely purged of body and feeling, a self without shadows, a self totally transparent to itself, totally knowing of itself, totally self-possessed, totally certain of itself. *On the contrary, the self which responds to this question is an embodied, historical self feeling today, very empty, very much alone, very unsure of itself; a self in fragments, a self in the fury of Being.* It is this historical experience of ourselves which forms the basis, the starting point, for our attempt to set in motion a practice of the self very different from Descartes,' and indeed very different from the modern: *a practice which assigns to our visionary capacity an historical task in response to our need*. (p. 15)

How many men would privately identify such a fragmenting of the certain self, the faltering of the Cartesian gaze? How many men could "cry" such a self? Crying represents a quintessential deviation from the Cartesian self, a way of being that carries both a bodily and a symbolic valence and power:

> What is crying? Is it merely an accidental or contingent fact that the eyes are capable of crying as well as seeing? Or is crying the most intimate, most closely touching relationship to seeing? Is crying essential for vision?.... Only human beings cry.... What does this show about us? What does this show *to* us? Is it this capacity for crying, then, which enobles our vision, makes it human? And is it not the *absence* of this capacity which marks off the inhuman..... Crying is not something we 'do.' *Crying is the speech of powerlessness, helplessness*. (p. 172)

The inability or unwillingness to cry has become the cliché to represent all that is problematic about contemporary manhood. But surely it is more than a choice, and more than an *individual* choice:

> Crying, of course, is involuntary. But the experience of crying, with which we are all familiar, can be taken up by the self, taken to heart, and turned, through the gift of our thought, into the *practice* of the self. The practice is concerned with the cultivation of our capacity for care, *Sorge*, feeling; our care-taking capacity, that is, as visionary beings.... *Crying becomes a critical social practice of the self when the vision it brings forth makes a difference in the world, gathering other people into the wisdom of its attunement*. (p. 173)

Crying may represent a grieving for the lost self. But as a "social practice of the self," the act of crying itself breaks down barriers between self and other, the very primacy of the self:

> *Crying is a breakdown of vision*. The breakdown is two-fold. It expresses the inadequacy of vision as a guide for action, as a mode of *praxis*, as an organ of response. But it also expresses the vulnerability of a false ego-logical composure. If only for a moment, the egobody's control over our visionary being-- is overwhelmed and overcome.(p. 177)

What alternative vision does Levin "see"? Curiously, he chooses to rehabilitate the "gaze":

> The ideal of *Gelassenheit* calls for a gaze which is relaxed, playful, gentle, crying; a gaze which moves freely, and with good feeling; a gaze which is alive with awareness; a gaze at peace with itself, not moved, at the deepest level of its motivation, by anxiety, phobia, defensiveness and aggression; a gaze which resists falling into patterns of seeing that are rigid, dogmatic, prejudiced, and stereotyping; a gaze which moves into the world bringing with it peace and respect, because it is rooted in, and issues form, a place of integrity and deep self-respect. (p. 238)

Joan Copjec's (1994) article *The Cogito, the Unconscious, and the Invention of Crying* is, among other things, a very useful account of man's separation from his-selves and from the culture. She boldly says:

> The condition of the modern was the elimination from the field of experience, thus the field of the sayable, of the most intimate part of every citizen's being, which was given at that time the philosophical name *cogito* and later came to be called by Freud *unconscious*.... The unconscious separates us from our very selves, but due to castration there is a "male mode of separation and a and a female one. (p. 2).

If one cannot be a "spectator" of oneself, one must depend on others.

> The inability of the others to understand means that something in this discourse has gone unattended; an inarticulable remainder persists, which is precisely the cry or the appeal to the other to pay closer attention, to listen a little longer for what the words want to say.... A kind of missed encounter between two unknowns... constitutes sociality. The public sphere, in short, is the *barred* Other, the sphere in which the subject's innermost being goes unrecognized. (p. 3)

Copjec locates the advent of real crying in the late eighteenth century, coincident with the new literary form of melodrama. *Melodrama*? Hardly a male way of expression, one might rightly observe. But maybe it needs to be rehabilitated as "the cry or appeal to the other to pay closer attention," even the appeal to one's-self to pay closer attention to the formerly forbidden or devalued. Peter Brooks links it to modern man's need to see his-self as unique; his need to "say it all":

> [Brooks] argues that the felt inadequacy of language to make everything absolutely clear is compensated for, in melodrama, by the grandiose gesture, the schematic tableau, the expressive *mise-en-scène*, music, the inarticulate cry, all those mute signs which we commonly take as characteristic of the genre and which make visible what is otherwise absent and ineffable in the narrative, by words alone. (p. 2)

Women are often accused of being melodramatic. When women say "Why can't men cry," they are asking for something much more than a moment of vulnerability, but something much less than the disempowerment that men imagine and fear. They are asking for a sea/see change in a hegemonic, totalizing tradition of knowing; that is, a *body* of plenitude and a plenitude of body. Men can sometimes cry in a moment of overpowering import, but the same man will likely have great difficulty shedding a tear over a little moment of joy or sadness. There is *much* more to be said by Man about the paucity of male tears. Could men embrace the overstatement of melodrama? If he "cries," perhaps he should really cry.

Deodorizing man.

One of my most cherished memories of growing up is of the times I go to work in the old Stude' with my father. It is an ugly but faithful old truck. It smells of used oil and sawdust, cigarette smoke, farts, and the sweat that, even as boy, I recognize as coming only from real man's work. Even as I sit many years later, I can effortlessly transport myself back to the moment I can smell the smells and hear the sounds of the old motor and of my dad's renowned whistling.... We are driving home against the setting sun. He doesn't speak, but it doesn't occur to me in that magic moment to even wonder what he is thinking. I feel neither discounted nor particularly noticed. I am one with the moment, bonded to it and to my father in a silent way. The silence feels alright because I have my own thoughts and dreams. The old truck cab envelopes us in a safety and communion that could go on forever.... Only later do I wonder about many things, but now it is too late to ask.

Duroche's (1990) study is an intriguing genealogy and analysis of the male body and matters of *smell* as ideological constructions in relation to the social order. Echoing the work of others, Duroche argues that *man's* body is strangely invisible in relation to the female body: "*Nobody seems to have noticed that men's bodies have quietly absented themselves*. Somewhere along the line, men have managed to keep out of the glare, escaping from the relentless activity of sexual definitions" (citing Coward, p. 172). The 18th century body, according to Duroche, is still "ungendered and generic" in a way reminiscent of the Medieval body. Somewhere in the 18th century "an 'anatomy and physiology of incommensurability replaced a metaphysics of hierarchy.... No one cared about anatomical and concrete physiological differences between the sexes *until such differences became politically important*'" (p. 173).

The political dilemma for men in the Enlightenment, Duroche says, is "how--given Enlightenment beliefs in universal, inalienable, and equal rights-- 'to derive the real world of male dominion [over] women... from an original state of genderless bodies" (p. 174). The "new biology" will offer, predictably enough, a way to justify a new aesthetics of the body. Duroche says there is a new keenness in the sense of smell beginning in the 18th century due to shifts in notions of public and private *space,* increasing differentiation in ideologies of the male and female body, and increasing industrialization. Polite and hygienic society becomes preoccupied with *deodorizing* spaces (first public spaces, then domestic and private ones) and abstracting the senses. Boys can no longer be boys with the same impunity. The senses gradually become "abstract," severed from their bodily origins.

As we have already seen, there is tremendous concern with feminization in the Victorian era. Perfume moves from a link with the masculine to a link with the feminine. For men it is linked to "artifice, affectation, effeminate fashion'--in short, *all the tendencies suspected of leading to 'degeneration' of the male--turning him into a woman"* (p. 179). Man(hood) has a new challenge: how can he be civilized, deodorized and attractive to women, without appearing to succumb to her wishes and sensibilities. Men respond, as they often have, by shutting out important parts of themselves: "Transformations in many different areas of experience in the 19th century collaborated... to dull male perception, encapsulate men in unfeeling bodies, which they neglected and abused, and increased the sense of isolation, separation that ultimately led to a growing homophobia" (p. 180). Sensitivity to the subtleties of smell become part of women's work.

It is interesting to note that working men's smells are "enobled" for a time, though even the sailor and the cowboy will eventually be sanitized; albeit within very clearly defined and circumscribed spaces:

> Considerable attention [is devoted] to the odors of masculine space, particularly offices, 'corrupted by emanations from the bachelors who people it.' As public space became purified... certain aspects of proletarian experience were elevated and incorporated into the ideal of 'masculinity,' and certain smells and signs signifying smell were revalorized. The enobling of tobacco, workers, and sailors is such a case.... 'Smoking [like pissing] creates an equality among its confraternity... rich and poor rub shoulders, without being surprised by the fact, in places where tobacco is sold, *and only there* [author's emphasis].' (citing Corbin, pp. 181-182)

It is entirely predictable that women become both desired and needed as essential currency in their absent presence (and for some of the same reasons Sedgwick enumerates) as men redefine smell:

> The importance of smells in the genesis of male sensitivity in the 19th century cannot be overemphasized. Once again, repulsion was associated with the absence of coeducation. The college boardinghouse was an accumulation of the mephitism of the walls, the social stench of the domestic staff, and the odour of the sperm of the schoolmaster and his masturbating pupils. *This stench, perceived as male, sharpened desire for the presence of females.* (citing Corbin, p. 185)

Duroche's genealogy of "manly smell" hinges on the evolution of the concepts of *self* and *space*--proper distance and the separation of public and private--and disembodiment of the senses. What of themes of intimacy? His concluding note echoes Sedgwick's "erotic triangle":

> Collins contends the West 'has routinely subjected male homosocial desire' to a kind of 'aversion therapy,' the aim of which is to privatize homosocial desire within the middle-class nuclear family, where it takes the 'normal' shape of an Oedipal triangle.... Weeks argues in a similar vein, citing Deleuze and Guattari: 'The Oedipal triangle is the personal and private territoriality that corresponds to all of capitalism's efforts at social reterritorialization. Oedipus was always the displaced limit for every social formation, since it is the displaced representative of desire.... *The privatizing of homosocial desire within the family has drained all other social relations between men of much of their meaning or at least 'normalcy.'* (pp. 183-184)

To privatize formerly male spaces and to feminize and deodorize both private and public spaces (I think of *Mr.Clean* and potent toilet bowl cleaners, not to mention underarm deodorants "strong enough for a man") is at once to "deprive" men of enclaves where relations with men are unencumbered by male homophobia and ambivalent feelings about the influence of women (it is perhaps difficult to bemoan the latter); and to thrust men and women into a santitized relationship hothouse where they become the only source and currency for each other. Traditional male spaces have perhaps always been misogynistic ones. But on Sedgwick's account Woman is still apt to be an absent presence, a silent but vital member of an erotic triangle. What, then, of the home as a feminized space? If capitalism's Oedipal triangle does indeed privatize and thus legitimize male homosocial desire, its effects on intimate relation within the family and in particular between fathers and sons are perhaps not yet clear.

Men's bodies may today be cleansed of their natural odors, but they are today once again adorned with a plethora of perfumes. What do we make of contemporary commercial smell-making, often linked with androgynous images and even unisex odors? These new odors might be seen as "feminine," but man is still very much centered and in control if we examine the images in the advertisements. We could see this as a bellwether of loosened gender boundaries, or a re-jigging of hegemony.

Synopsis

I begin this chapter intending that it be a survey of some of the more important or at least interesting and provocative moments in the history of manhood's construction. It becomes more provocative, for me if not for my reader, than I anticipate. Man's gender gymnastics are quite relentless. Were the issues not so serious and the stakes so high, it would be tempting to describe manhood as carnival and masquerade. The gymnastics become something more than metaphor as we examine man's *body* and senses and the ebb and flow of their visibility and expressions. If men are becoming more attuned to women and feminized spaces, there are consequences. Manhood's hegemony is still intact, though perhaps beginning to unravel at this point of my discussion. Where will the search for the elusive essence lead us?

Chapter Six

REINSTATING ESSENTIAL MANHOOD

Introduction

As we see clearly in Chapter V, Man moves ideologies and signifiers around to suit the exigencies of the time and his perception of political imperatives and threat from the feminine. Bodies, particularly women's bodies (though not only women's bodies), are theorized and re-theorized in a continuous process. Biological essentialism is the ideology most often pressed into service. Essential man is having a vigorous revival of late, so it seems useful to focus for a bit on the more influential of his/its proponents. Warren Farrell and Robert Bly's essentialisms in particular are all the more notable because they represent such turnarounds from their earlier thinking. Farrell, Bly, John Gray, Helen Chodorow and Carol Gilligan will make strange bedpersons indeed.

Warren Farrell: Feminist to Masculinist

The liberated man.

Farrell's *The Liberated Man* is hailed upon its original 1975 publication as a revolutionary new approach to gender relations. By now, the "women's liberation movement" is thriving, though it has only begun to make an impact on the lives of ordinary women. Relatively few men will yet admit sympathy with the "libbers." Farrell takes pains to make his readers and television viewers aware of his sympathy with the women's movement; exemplified by his three year membership on the board of the New York chapter of National Organization for Women. What is this radically pro-feminist man saying about men and manhood:

- The isolation of the women's movement in America feeds the male tendency to avoid introspection. The white middle class American male likes to think that everything is someone else's problem.... [He cannot see] that his own socialized masculinity might be confining or worth re-examining. (p. 4)

- We [men] learn to articulate, to pick out the flaw in someone's statement or to come up with the exception to the rule in a generality, but in the process we forget how to listen and seek out the nugget of truth in what someone is saying. When we do listen, our training to be logical often preoccupies us with the logical formula and formal structure of a thought rather than understanding its emotional impact. (p. 8)

- Changing men is connected to women's real liberation as a result of the ability men have to prevent women from seeking a whole range of alternatives unless women play the game by men's rules or value system.... In essence [men] control a woman's freedom in relation to society and make laws regarding even her most personal possession, her body. Men control this system so completely that women who enter find it easier to adopt the masculine values and admit other women on the same terms. (pp. 12-13)

- Men's magazines... view the bedroom as almost entirely sex-oriented and woman-oriented. If men are pictured, it is never being sensuous.... Men learn to be more `thing'-oriented, be it a gadget or a penis....`It was alright when the girl in the *Playboy* centerfold was photographed naked, since that event was arranged by and for men. But let a woman initiate nudity, especially if it is for her own pleasure, and immediately men see the apocalypse upon us.' (pp. 25-26)

- In order to be a real boy, a boy must not be caught being at all like a girl. A fundamental disrespect for everything associated with a girl permeates the school readers. (p. 33)

- A man's penis turns soft when he cannot control a woman, but it also turns soft when he worries about it being hard.... It is obvious men must take the bulk of the responsibility to `humanize the penis' or, as I prefer, to integrate the penis into sensuality rather than integrate sexuality into the penis. (pp. 52-53)

- A man's emotional constipation is supplemented by his dependence constipation. The job and leadership striver thinks of himself as independent, but the very characteristics which make him appear independent... are the things on which he is dependent. (p. 64)

- Men employ silence in special situations-- those requiring the expression of emotional and dependency needs.... Men can also use this mystique of silence about their fears and emotions to inhibit women. (p. 65)

This is 1975, let us not forget. Radical stuff for a man writing about men. In this time when the women's movement is really beginning to take hold, I read Farrell as firmly but sensitively putting men in their place; as taking a long-overdue stand against male hegemony. He writes forcefully and convincingly of the hegemony of male-defined values as "reality" in society. He documents quite clearly the need for men to become more conscious of women's experience. He emphasizes the need for "liberation" from particular performance "straightjacket" roles for men and women; an obvious step toward gender equality. He debunks essentialist notions of motherhood and advocates shared parenting responsibility. He sees the beginnings of a "men's liberation movement" (putting himself in its center). His hope is that men, in "liberating" themselves from traditional male values, from brittle models of masculinity, will also liberate women.

Farrell makes a very powerful case to say that men can benefit from women's liberation. This is the *coup de grâce* of his essaying strategy. If he cannot convince men to change by all of his other appeals, he hopes to do so by saying, "Hey, there's something of concrete value in this for you." We can imagine the appeal of his 21 examples for men: A woman will not be as likely to feel the need to control her husband, sexual interest heightens, anxieties about one's sex role decrease, a man is freed from being the sole source of his partner's happiness.

What of Farrell the essayist? He is a master essayist even in this, his earliest work. His discourse begins and ends with his own experience-- some will say it is unduly self-congratulatory. But he never leaves his reader out. Clear as he is on his view of men's responsibility, his tone is never a harsh one. Farrell makes the essay very convincing and easy to follow by clearly organizing his experience, argument, references, and examples in manageable chunks; using catchy chapter and section headings ("The Masculine Mystique as the Masculine Mistake," for example) to engage his reader; and using regularly-spaced italicized summaries that are so clear as to make it almost unnecessary to read the intervening. As with any essay, though perhaps more so in this case, one can convey the strength of his arguments only inadequately by choosing a few excerpts out of their context.

Whether Farrell's essay passes the main test-- that he engages the community in co-creating "good sense"-- is perhaps more open to question. The book is enormously popular with many women who are waiting, it seems, for someone to name their experience with men in a way they can use to say *to men*, "See, it is not just me-- Dr. Farrell says so." Farrell is ahead of his time-- men are not ready to embrace his agenda for change.

Making It better .

It is the early 1980's, and I am the guest of a female colleague at a workshop with Warren Farrell. We come to the workshop as a part of our planning for a workshop presentation on issues of men and violence. The majority of the audience is female-- the men who have come have clearly been "brought" by the women in their lives. It is clearly in the air that the women feel more comfortable than the men; that the focus will somehow be on men's attitudes and behaviors rather than women's. I expect to agree with Farrell's position; wearing my own pro-feminist stance as I do like a badge.

He begins by talking about his work with NOW, and then summarizes in a clear and convincing way the major arguments of his book. He then invites the audience to participate in a series of role-reversal exercises. The point, he says, is to educate the men by putting us into women's shoes (he doesn't say what it will do for women). In one exercise, the women stand on the theater seats, the men on the floor. We are then told to try to dance together-- the usual height difference reversed. The evening proceeds amidst uneasy laughter. In the final exercise, Farrell asks all the men to come up on the stage and stand in a long line. The women are then to come and "eye us up," to appraise us with a view to choosing who they might find most attractive. The exercise ends with one man being elected "most desirable." It is not me, and I do not expect it to be me. But much as I would like to think I have moved beyond this, I cannot pretend that it doesn't matter. It feels, as Farrell undoubtedly intends, like a meat market: uncomfortable, degrading, puzzling.

I find it difficult, as I leave the workshop, to sort out my feelings about the experience. At one level, it has been useful in giving me some notion of what women must go through every day. But it feels like a very narrow band of understanding. It supports my view that both men and women would be better off if men could acknowledge "their" position as the more oppressive gender (I identify myself as one of the "good guys"). But a part of me is also well aware that I know very little of women's experience. *I know little of many men's experiences either.* I am left with vague feelings of unease.

Why men are the way they are.

It is now 1986, and Farrell has just published *Why Men Are The Way They Are*. By now, I have spent several months working in a shelter for assaulted women. I feel useful there, and every day is a wonderful learning experience. I am constantly aware of how I, the only man there, might be perceived by the mothers and children. I expect anger against me as a man but find quite the opposite--that fact should perhaps be worrisome to me, but it will not be so for some time to come. I am struck by how profoundly the women (and their children) had been violated by the men they said they had once loved, or still do love.

Among other things, the shelter experience has by now enabled me to teach and write with considerably enhanced credibility about issues of domestic violence. I must admit that I enjoy being seen as a sensitive man with capacity to make things different; an altogether different and more powerful set of feelings from those I had experienced on the playground earlier in my life. I have been introduced to the whole socio-political analysis of violence against women and children, and to the notion of men's responsibility for that violence. It is very difficult, in the midst of my work with family violence, not to get into judgements of my own sex. By now I am often struck, in telling acquaintances of my experience, by the silence of most men. I am undoubtedly an irritation to them. I hear and see their defensive side. I do not see their hurting or puzzled sides, or my own self-righteous side.

This time, Farrell begins the book by sharing more personally of himself. He writes of his mother's life-long battle with depression, the meaning that work outside the home brought her, and the impact she has on his understanding of the women's movement and of women's struggles to be taken seriously by men. She dies of cancer at age 49. It is clear that she has been a powerful role model for him. He writes also of his brother's death in an avalanche resulting from a choice to proceed ahead of his woman friend; and the death of a close friend in the Vietnam war. He connects the losses of these men who are important to him in terms of his concept of *power*: "male power is really male powerlessness." In juxtaposing all of these traumatic losses, he asks, "Was it possible for the sexes to hear each other without saying, 'My powerlessness is greater than your powerlessness'?

Farrell, interestingly, does not make reference to the fact that Ursie, his wife, has divorced him and married a fellow IBM executive; to the fact that he is no longer invited to talk-shows or to golf dates with celebrities; to the fact that he is no longer on the NOW executive. The tone of this essay is, from the very beginning, remarkably different from *The Liberated Man*. He says he has re-thought issues relationship between men and women, and, anticipating his readers' questions about such a turn-around, immediately launches into an explanation of his construction of listening and power. The listening and the power are both zero-sum, he says; both at an interpersonal man-woman level, and in a historical perspective. Male and female power are equivalent, he seems to say--it is a level playing field. When we listen to the female experience of powerlessness, we do not hear the male experience of powerlessness. The women's movement, he says, has had enormous impact in bettering conditions for women, but it has served to obscure men's powerlessness. It is in this historical perspective that Farrell explains his turn-around: "the more deeply I [we] understood women's experience of powerlessness, the more I assumed men had the power women did not have. In fact, what I was understanding was the female experience of male power" (p. xvii).

Farrell says he now wants to restore the balance by presenting the male experience of female power. His litany of male grievance is even more stark than was his 1975 list of pro-feminist female grievances:

- The best foreplay is success. (p.63)
- She gets love by messing it up [appearing helpless]; he gets love by performing. (p. 81)
- He is learning, subconsciously, that female support, nurturing, is conditional-- it goes to the men on the playing field. Therefore her support is really pressure to keep performing. (p. 117)
- She charges for what he gives away. (p. 120)
- The fear of emotional contact with men out of fear of being a `sexual suspect' makes boys, ironically, even more powerless before girls. (p. 132)

- The fact that we create different fantasies for each sex and use marriage to fulfill one's sex fantasy but not the other's is the real double standard. (p.176)

- Each woman who protects the fragile male ego is doing her part to reinforce the fragility of the male ego, a fragility she can exploit. (p. 326)

By now, Farrell seems quite obsessed with issues of power and its connection to sex (who "gets" it and who "gives" it). Though he makes more explicit references to "intimacy" than he has done previously, he does not offer a definition. Perhaps we can infer one from his examples:

- Women thought I was being most vulnerable when I was discussing genuine feelings of love, mistakes I had made, and feelings about my family. Actually I was being most vulnerable when I discussed sexual desires. But my experience had taught me that if I wanted to be intimate with a woman in a way that included sex, I should mention intimacy more and sex less. (p. xxi)

- From a man, 'I'm not interested in marriage' is the equivalent of a woman's first 'I'm not interested in having sex.' Just as a man often tries to turn the sexual no's into maybes and the maybes into yeses, so the woman often tries to turn 'no commitment' into maybe, and maybe into yes. (p. 154)

- Why do so many women focus so much more than men on intimacy? Because within the framework from which they have chosen their men, intimacy is often the biggest missing ingredient. And because these men, by taking care of much of their primary need, allowed them the luxury of focussing on the neglect of intimacy. (p. 164)

- Both sexes tend to feel needed, or special, in the area where their partner feels most deprived. Which gives each sex a short-term investment in keeping its partner less than fully powerful.... We have learned to think of ourselves as intimate with those who need us. Men have learned to feel okay about getting the "intimacy' of feeling needed by a woman who is financially deprived; in contrast women have received a conflicted message in their attitude toward men: they want men to need them yet feel neediness is unmanly. They 'turn off' to a man they feel they must 'mother'-- so only a little leeway is allowed between his showing neediness and being 'too needy.' (p. 358)

Farrell's examples of "intimacy" revolve around several themes: intimacy as instrumental calculation, *quid pro quo* equation, or power relation; intimacy as need for nurturance or "being looked after"; intimacy as sex given and gotten; intimacy as vulnerability acknowledged. Intimacy is given or withheld-- and more withheld by women than by men, he says. It is difficult to find any sense in Farrell's essay of intimacy as the "between" or shared.

Farrell's framing of intimacy in such terms is a most fascinating and illuminating reframing of issues, in a series of reframings! It assumes that men really want intimate relations in some form or other; which, when we strip away all of the heavy cultural baggage, is undoubtedly true. But it also assumes a simple linear equation--that men and women can and do weigh intimacy against other needs and ways of being, that more of one thing necessarily means less of another. It is an archetypical male zero-sum calculation. If intimacy really is a "fight," as Farrell so clearly says, and if men were to "win" it on whatever terms--I wonder who would *really* win and lose? Can we see any possibilities for truly intimate male-female relationships in the context of this discourse of calculation, this fencing match?

Farrell makes much of man's *needs* (instinctually defined, we presume), putting those needs in a context of deprivation at the hands of women. It is hard to argue with the notion that men have needs. Perhaps it is not so much the degree of such needs that is problematic in this view, as it is the very definition of it and its satisfaction. The pressure for their satisfaction and the degree and terms of their satisfaction sets up what Farrell calls a "mothering" situation (it is interesting that we rarely speak of fathering in a similar light) which inevitably evokes power dynamics. If one gender (male) is enjoined by the cultural story from any acknowledgement of such neediness (we often call it "dependency") there is great potential for disruption. Fusion is a likely dynamic, but surely that is not intimacy.

Farrell says, over and over and in countless variations, that intimacy is about sex is about power. It is not power in the Foucauldian embodied sense; it is rather a matter of "access" to things: external rewards and resources, internal rewards and resources, interpersonal contact or desire, physical health attractiveness and intelligence, sexual fulfilment (pp. 8-9). When men buy into the dominant program laid out for them (he is not as clear as he might be on the origins of such a program) Farrell says, they lose the power to control their own lives. *Women benefit more from such hegemony and the values it prescribes*:

> Women are still taught to be sexually cautious until two, three, or all four conditions-- attraction, respect, emotions, and intellect-- are met. Many women add... singleness and status/success.... Many add... the man must ask her out, he must pay, and he must risk rejection by initiating the first kiss.... Men are socialized to want sex as long as only one condition is fulfilled-- physical attraction.... Women gain enormous sexual leverage over men. They can use this power to get the external rewards of which they feel deprived. (p. 13)

How many men does Farrell speak for? To the extent that he presents the essence of what represents for men the traditional narratives of power and their sense of their place in the world-- and he does so right down to the point of men's "whining" about not getting what they want--then he probably does speak for many men. If the most outstanding achievement of feminism is to challenge such narratives, it is entirely predictable that many men will fight back to discredit the challenge. Farrell is only capturing, with uncanny accuracy and timing, the essence of the contemporary gender battle. The timing of his epiphany and turn-around could not be more propitious if it were calculated to be so.... It is not, of course, my place to suggest that it is. New kinds of discourse are desperately needed-- does Farrell contributes to them here? What will he do in his next book?

The myth of male power.

Farrell does not disappoint. "There has never been a moment when I have seen men feeling more gagged," he says in his *Introduction* to *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men are the Disposable Sex* (1993b, p. 11). He says men are victims, and they feel like victims. He says all of this has happened in an "evolutionary instant;" that gender arrangements that were functional for the human species in "Stage I" (and that he strongly supported in the 1970's) have suddenly become dysfunctional in "Stage II":

> For thousands of years, most marriages were in Stage I-- survival -focussed.... In Stage II, couples increasingly desired to be soul mates.... The people with the most freedom to redefine love were women who had married the most successful men. (pp. 42-43)

And so Farrell, still proclaiming himself a pro-feminist, now says, with caveats, that he is also "masculinist." For all that, he continues and intensifies his campaign, begun in *Why Men are the Way They Are,* to overturn the feminist agenda. He would disclaim that, saying that the world is "both patriarchal and matriarchal, both male-dominated and female-dominated" (p. 18). What do we make of that enigmatic statement in the face of his mantra: *Women have it good, men have it bad*? He meticulously and relentlessly builds his argument on behalf of men, supporting it with a plethora of data from a wide range of sources. Lest we miss the point, he sets all his major points,;not in italics as in his previous books, but in boldface type. I quote some of the highlights of his emboldened declarations, organizing them thematically (the themes are somewhat arbitrary since all of Farrell's discourse seems to return in one way or another to *sex* and *power)*:

"The Glass Cellars of the Disposable Sex":

- For men, there are in essence three male-only drafts: the draft of men to all the wars, the draft of Everyman to unpaid bodyguard, and the draft of men to all the hazardous jobs or `death professions.' (p. 105)

- Ten `glass cellars' might be thought of as creating men's inequality of disposability: suicide, prisoners, homelessness, death professions, disease, assassinations & hostage-taking, executions, draft, combat, early deaths. (p. 366)

- If power means having control over one's own life, then perhaps there is no better ranking of the impact of sex roles and racism on power over our lives than life expectancy [white women live longest]. (p. 30)

- The man feels that by killing himself, he is `killing the burden.' For him, then, committing suicide is not a selfish act, but an act of love. (p. 171)

- Historically, the obligations of dads deprive dads of love while the obligations of moms provide moms with love. (p. 50-51)

Farrell's roll/role call of the "ten glass cellars" is, on first reading, a chilling and thoroughly believable account, and he documents it most convincingly. He ascribes both the benefits and the blame to women; neither to men. We must hear him out.

Men's Obligations:

- The adults of the 1990's are a generation of men criticized for what they were obligated to do by a generation of women privileged enough to escape the obligation; they are a generation of unacknowledged men coexisting with a generation of acknowledged women. (p. 155)

- The degree to which a country is emancipated is the degree to which it frees men from the obligation to protect women and socializes women to equally protect men. No country is very emancipated. (p. 136)

There can be no question that many men today feel confused. To be a man is to be burdened not only with the traditional obligations of men--albeit obligations that men were instrumental in creating and from which men have long derived power and privilege--but with the added burden of doubt and gender ferment. Everyman does not see and feel his privilege in the face of this uncertainty. He may feel that he has done all that is expected of a man, a husband, a father; that he has worked his butt off as a man is supposed to do; that his wants and needs are simple and reasonable enough. Why, then, should he be so unacknowledged, so unappreciated, and so pathologized?

Women's Privilege/Power:

- What we have come to call male power, then, actually produced female power. (p. 183)

- The expression of [women's] depression is better than the repression of [men's] depression. (p. 176)

- Women are the only oppressed group to share the same parents as the `oppressor,' to be born into the middle class and upper class as frequently as the oppressor. (p. 40)

- She went from being a baby machine, cooking machine, and cleaning machine to having time for love. He went from being a performing machine near the home to a performing machine away from home. And having less time for love.... Male technology and male

> laws freed women from female biology as female destiny and created female biology as male destiny. (pp. 50-51)

- So the government provides the woman with more than what a poor man provides--enough so that she `marries' the government rather than the poor man.... The man who is poor becomes disposable. (p. 347)

I grant Farrell that the man who is poor becomes disposable and invisible. The woman who is poor is not exactly celebrated in our time, by the government she is "married" to or by society. Women end up with both power and time, he says. Something is wrong with this picture. *Where do we locate intimacy in it*?

Sex and Violation:

- The only two-sex studies that have ever been done... find women and men to be equally as likely to initiate domestic violence at every level of severity. (p. 264)

- So the miniskirt, perfume, and flirting unconsciously tell the man that this woman wants an end to her [obligatory] involvement in the workplace. (p. 291)

- The problem with every judgement of sexual behavior is that it is made by people who aren't being stimulated as they are making the judgement. (p. 312)

- Men will be our rapists as long as men are our initiators [of sex]. (p. 341)

- Homophobia reflected an unconscious societal fear that homosexuality was a better deal than heterosexuality for the individual. Homosexuality was like OPEC calling nations wimps if they bought oil from a more reasonably priced source. (p. 87)

- Every woman knows that if there was only male birth control, she would not feel in control, she would feel out of control. `Trust me' from a man is laughable; `trust me' from a woman is the law. (p. 51)

It is hard to believe Farrell is saying these things, though *he may well be capturing what many men think and feel*. There is surely great value in that, whether we might want to hear it or not. And he did promise that he would not be politically correct. He turns the feminist discourse of violation of women by men ("Violation is about abuse of power--not sexuality") on its ear. More accurately, perhaps, he turns it back on its eye; justifying the male gaze and male violation in terms of women's expression of their sexuality (Read: "It is their own fault"). In some ways it is reminiscent of the old "men have these urges, you know," school of male power. Farrell cannot be unaware of the voluminous feminist scholarship on gender since he still claims to be pro-feminist; I wonder how he can seemingly ignore it. I wonder why he does not acknowledge more clearly the extent to which hegemonic man has *created* the particular image of "woman" as sex object to whom he now ascribes so much power. I want to be fair to Farrell, though, so I struggle to find a redeeming feature of his argument; a point I have missed, perhaps.

Somehow we do have to take account of the paradox that Farrell calls male "disposability:" Is it true, as Farrell says, that "the deeper purpose of violence against men was to prevent violence against women" (1993b, p. 75)? Many women would challenge this, saying that they have more fear of violence from the men close to them than from war. Do men feel good about any form of violence? Does it get them what they really want-- intimacy, loving and being loved? I have to doubt it. The feminist analysis would say that the violence of a few men keeps women in their place and makes it unnecessary for the majority of men to be violent to maintain their dominant position. What does this have to do with intimacy? Surely intimacy is impossible within a relation of real or apprehended violence--indeed, within any relation of power difference.

Farrell invokes the "dance" metaphor that has been so used and abused in discourses about gender and issues such as violence. It is evocative, attractively simplistic, but all wrong. He is very concerned about who pays for the dance and the drinks; but he ignores, whether deliberately or not, questions about who leads the dance and who has the fun. And, I must ask, is this a "dance" that will lead to intimacy? His example of the cheerleader is instructive (and yet another masterpiece of reframing):

> Men today are just beginning to confront some of the concepts in *The Liberated Man*: the degree to which we have become `high level mediocres'; how the cheerleader is a metaphor not just for women's pressure to perform, but also for women's pressure on men to perform--and, therefore, the message a man hears is that if he loses his position as performer, the following week the cheerleader will be cheering for his replaceable part (a

> new man with his old number).... I explain why taxpayer-support of high school football-as-education is really taxpayer subsidy of male-only child abuse. (1986, p. 117)

Farrell puts an intriguing spin on whining: "For thousands of years, complaining was functional for women... Complaining was dysfunctional for men--it attracted nobody.... Complaining and asking for help, then, are not evolutionary shifts for women; complaining and asking for help are evolutionary shifts for men" (p. 369-370). He says that if women *really* want men to say how they feel, as they say they do, then they will have to listen to his whining. He is right in the sense that what one really feels should not have to be censored in an intimate relation. But to try to rehabilitate *whining*... surely this is too much!

As a man, I too feel like whining in a moment when I want to be looked after and no one responds. Even as I do it, I know very well that only I can really do anything about my needs; though I will not want to be caught out on this point. Of course, a certain measure of sympathetic nurturing between intimates eases the pain. Are complaining and asking for help the same thing? To whine about women, to bemoan that women do not understand men, to insinuate that women are not looking after men like they once did, to bemoan the pressure for "political correctness,"--the whine that blames can only create distance. It is safer for a man, of course, than saying flat out that he feels displaced and decentered, quite vulnerable and exposed to the world; and that he needs to know what he can do about it. Such an admission would demand that he take responsibility for himself, even when the content might be a request for help in doing so. That would not be a whine.

Serious whining stalls, for the time being, any pressure to change power arrangements that center men-- by distancing Other and recentering men! Silence is also part of the same repertoire; as can be the counter-accusations of "man-bashing" from men who find themselves under pressure to change. But, and Farrell *utterly* misses this point in his own whining, none of these ways of being do anything to secure the very thing that he says men really want. Surely neither sympathy nor caretaking nor power politics represent intimacy, nor do they lead to intimacy.

Farrell's *Tour de Force*:

> *Fear of limiting the power of the sex with the greater spending power, the greater beauty power, the greater sexual power, the greater net worth among its heads of households,*

> *and the greater options in marriage, children, work, and life creates the corruptness of absolute power which will ultimately lead to a much bloodier battle between the sexes....* It leads us to understand how each sex had more rights and more power in the area in which it had more responsibilities; how each sex dominated in the area in which it was most likely to die; how each sex paid the other for performing its role; how both sexes paid a price for the price they were paid. (p. 358)

Women hold the balance of power, on this account. Farrell talks a lot about responsibility; expressing it most clearly in terms of men's primary financial responsibility. What he doesn't say so strongly is that females have been socialized to be responsible for intimacy issues and for social structures such as marriage and parenting in which intimacy is presumed to exist. The example of spousal assault is a useful one. Despite Farrell's claim, men are more violent than women. In some ways it is precisely a woman's sense of responsibility for the relationship and the children's emotional lives that keep her in subjugation. It may well be this very quality that is most threatening to *his* sense of power. Women have in many ways served as "emotion-brokers" for men. They have done so at their peril, it seems. Blamed for doing too much, blamed for doing too little, blamed for wanting more from men, blamed for staying with abusive men--I ask again: can intimacy exist in a relation of zero-sum power?

The discourses of victim and oppressor/abuser are always problematic and loaded. This "turnaround" question of men as victims is an important one, and a much more complex one than Farrell chooses to acknowledge. If gender is about a zero-sum power game as Farrell seems so relentlessly to argue, then it is perhaps inevitable that one gender becomes victim. Men, he says, have replaced women as the victims; and have become particularly victimized since the advent of--even because of--the women's movement. It is not my aim here to take women's part, though it is easy enough to argue against Farrell's point that men are now *the real and only victims*. What does such a blame-game do to men and to the possibilities for intimate relation between men and women?.

There are some problems with the feminist position that must be accounted for. On that point Farrell is quite right. The first and perhaps most problematic is that there is a huge gap between an analysis that says men occupy privileged positions in society, positions of power and dominance--and life as experienced by the vast majority of men. It is really a huge gap, and I would argue that even as men deny their feelings of vulnerability, they feel the gap between the cultural story/prescriptions and the unspoken emotional lives they live. Farrell is quite right in saying that men live with a great deal of unexpressed and unexpressable pain and doubt. The question is, what will they do with such feelings?

Another workshop.

It is now 1994, and I find myself at another Farrell workshop. I am not so eager to go this time. I have many problems with his analysis and where it might lead for men and for women, and I am not much in sympathy with the aims of the group that is sponsoring him. In fact, I find it very difficult to lay out the ticket price. As I enter the room, I am greeted enthusiastically by the two men in charge of registration. Another man is setting up a display of Farrell's books and tapes, while two men from MERGE (Men for Real Gender Equality) are setting up a display of their materials. Feeling like a fraud, I choose a seat and wait for the workshop to start.

The audience seems to be almost half female. This time, it seems, the men are in no way reluctant participants. Farrell is introduced by the chair of the sponsoring men's group. They hug, and Farrell introduces the workshop. His introduction, right down to the predictable reference to his three years on the NOW executive in the early 1970's, is the shadow side of the 1980's one. The words sound the same, but he has turned something around. He goes on: "Men have such poor communication skills with men that they put all their (relationship) eggs in women's baskets.... And so they have given up all their power to women." There is no gasp as there would have been in 1984. The men murmur in approval. The women do not object.

Farrell goes through the roll call of the "glass cellars" and the ways that men are the powerless "sex." This is very well received by the audience. He has us divide into groups of three and tell the others about our fathers. We are to speculate, or share the answer if we know it, about what our fathers would have done if they could live life over again. The men are encouraged to stand up and share these stories with the whole group. Many men do so, all of them with strong emotion: either of empathy for their fathers, or of anger and hurt at what they missed out on. I feel increasingly uncomfortable with the stories, or rather with something about this particular public spectacle of them. Perhaps genuine feelings are never inappropriate? I'm not sure the exercise honors either fathers or sons.

Farrell ends the formal part of the workshop at this point with an extended pitch to both men and women for his books and tapes. He makes extravagant claims for how they will change our lives, and ends with an offer to refund the purchase price of any of his books or tapes that do not meet the expectations of the purchaser. I have to leave, and I am not totally sorry to do so. I wonder what stand Farrell will take on issues of gender, intimacy and power in his next book?.... I still find the workshop unsettling, even in hindsight. The "turnaround" is too convenient for my taste. The stories are too predictable. And yet... and yet, perhaps I am just chafing at the realization that he is successfully challenging some beliefs I have held too dearly for too long. That he speaks for many men today is undisputable. I am left wondering about the future of this, what I call the men's backlash.

Robert Bly's Mythopoesis

The early Robert Bly becomes well known for his poetry, but even more for his leadership in the protest movement against the Vietnam war and his advocacy of a kinder and gentler manhood. He, like Warren Farrell, is much identified with the early women's movement. It is surprising, then, to find him switching gears so dramatically to write *Iron John* (1990), the masterful rehabilitation of essential manhood. Having made such a fuss over the evils of essentialist thought earlier in this essay (then holding my nose and continuing with my own variant of essentialism), and having made such a fuss over Warren Farrell's "conversion," I find it a daunting task to give the new Bly a fair reading. I must, however, for he is a giant figure in what is often called the mythopoetic men's movement. I must, too, because much of his poetry stirs me and so many other men so deeply.

What's a man to be? The contemporary Bly begins by describing 50's man:

> The Fifties man was supposed to like football, be aggressive... never cry, and always provide. *But receptive space or intimate space was missing in this image of a man.* The personality lacked some sense of flow. [He] had a clear vision of what a man was, and what male responsibilities were, but the isolation and one-sidedness of his vision were dangerous (p. 3)

He goes on to describe, and then to dismiss with faint praise, the androgynous man of the 70's man. He sees both 50's and 70's manhoods as problematic; symptomatic of a problem, a loss, and an unacknowledged grief within men (he will use that word "grief" a lot). He begins to spell out his vision of the question and the answer through an extended fairy tale, the Grimm tale of a young man's search for *Iron John*:

> In time, what they find, lying on the bottom of the pond, is a large man covered with hair from head to foot. The hair is reddish--it looks a little like rusty iron. They take the man back to the castle, and imprison him. The King puts him in an iron cage in the courtyard, calls him 'Iron John,' and gives the key into the keeping of the Queen.... When a contemporary man looks down into his psyche, he may, if conditions are right, find under the water of his soul, lying in an area no one has visited for a long time, an ancient hairy man.... Making contact with this Wild Man is the step the eighties male or the nineties male has to take. (pp. 5-6)
>
> The Iron John story proposes that the golden ball lies within the magnetic field of the Wild Man, which is a very hard concept for us to grasp. We have to accept the possibility that the true radiant energy in the male does not hide in, reside in, or wait for us in the feminine realm, nor in the macho/John Wayne realm, but in the magnetic field of the deep masculine. It is protected by the *instinctive* one who's underwater and who has been there we don't know how long. (p. 8)

The "ball"/soul of essential man(we cannot of course miss the sexual symbolism) cannot be recovered from the Queen-- but she holds the key. How is boy/man to wrest control from a Queen (Mother) who, Bly says, does not want to let go because she knows she will lose her boy:

> All over the country now one sees hulking sons acting ugly in the kitchen and talking rudely to their mothers, and I think it's an attempt to make themselves unattractive. If the old men haven't done their work to interrupt the mother-son unity, what else can the boys do to extricate themselves but to talk ugly? It's quite unconscious, and there's no elegance in it at all. (p. 19)

Industrial and post-industrial culture have had drastic impact on the father-son bond and the "wound" that comes of its absence: "Mitscherlich writes.... that if the son does not actually see what his father does during the day and through all seasons of the year, a hole will appear in the son's psyche, and the hole will fill with demons who tell him that his father's work is evil and that the father is evil" (p. 21). Bly frames the dilemma not in the familiar twentieth-century discourse of sex role theory, but rather in mythopoetic and Jungian terms:

> (Jung) said that when the son is introduced primarily by the mother to feeling, he will learn the female attitude toward masculinity and take a female view of his own father and his own masculinity. He will see his father through his mother's eyes. Since the father and the mother are in competition for the affection of the son, you're not going to get a straight picture of your father out of your mother, nor will one get a straight picture of the mother out of the father.... *The son often grows up with a wounded image of his father.* (p. 24))

It is not difficult as a man to identify strongly with Bly's notion of the "father wound." The boy/youth is, he says, subjected to many wounds, both inner and outer, in his quest of manhood. The Oedipal injunction to "leave" the mother is perhaps one of the strongest sources. What is perhaps more at issue is to determine who is responsible for it--who, in the end, is responsible for "hulking sons acting ugly"? Mothers have been blamed for many things for a long time. If Bly is making the case that mothers should take the blame for this one too, I part ways with him. Bly does acknowledge that many of the wounds come from the father, *whether by act of abuse, or by absence*. The wounding leads to a deep shame that needs to be healed. It can only be healed by taking the risk of going downward*; it cannot be a passive undertaking or a surface one.* Bly cites a line from the poet Vallejo to say it is "a heroic exit through the wound" (p. 73). He makes much of the wounds men carry from boyhood, though he does not see them all as negative in impact:

> Our story... says that where a man's wound is, that is where his genius will be. *Wherever the wound appears in our psyches, whether from alcoholic father, shaming mother, shaming father, abusing mother, whether it stems from isolation, disability or disease, that is precisely the place for which we will give our major gift to the community.* (p. 42)

This story of "genius" is an inspiring and empowering one. If the wound is the site of genius, it is also the place where man must endure what the Greeks call *katabasis*: "the whirlpool, the sinking through the floor, the Drop" (p. 70). The wound must be healed from the inside out. Men must take a courageous leap of faith, for nothing comes without cost: "A man's effort to move to the father's house takes a long time; it's difficult, and each man has to do it for himself" (p. 88).

> Now, standing next to the father, as they repair arrowheads, or repair plows, or wash pistons in gasoline, or care for birthing animals, the son's body has the chance to retune. Slowly, over months or years, that son's body-strings begin to resonate to the harsh, sometimes demanding, testily humorous, irreverent, impatient, opinionated, forward-driving, silence-loving older masculine body. Both male and female cells carry

> marvellous music, but the son needs to resonate to the masculine frequency as well as to the female frequency. Sons who have not received this retuning will have father-hunger all their lives. (p. 94)

Bly is a master with words. What man would not want to identify with this sense of "resonance"? Now to the crucial question: If boys must leave the mother, what *do* fathers offer to their sons? It is difficult to see beyond the poetic to the concrete:

> *Whatever the father gives us, it will not be the same kind of closeness that our mother offered....* When the foundation of mother nurturing and earth companionship is in place, then the old men can move in and bring male nurturing and its vision.... The father gives with his sperm a black overcoat around the soul, invisible in our black nights. He gave, and gives, a sheathing, or envelope, or coating around the soul made of intensity, shrewdness, desire to penetrate, liveliness, impulse, daring. The father's... gift contributes to the love of knowledge, love of action, and ways to honor the world of things. It seems particularly important these days to name some of the father's gifts. (p. 121)

Indeed, fathers do offer gifts, though not always in the ways we might expect. Earlier, I relate a story of a hot day of work on the Legion Hall. There is another, quieter, man there that day. Clarence is my father's friend, neighbor, and long-time employee. He watches the scene with amusement and a twinkle in his eye--saying nothing but much. I don't get it, then, but deep down I know there is something I should remember about the day, the moment.... I finally feel like I have broken the code. My thoughts go back to another day on the Nelson job. I think I hear him saying when my father isn't listening:

> Look, kid, don't worry too much about that Legion job. The holes don't matter--it's kind of a silly job anyway. Maybe he doesn't even believe in it himself. He really loves you, you know. He talks about you a lot when you are not here. He just wants you to do well at whatever you are doing. He thinks it is his job to teach you a bigger lesson.. He has to do his job. He is your father-that's just what fathers do. You'll be alright!

My telling of the old story brings a bit of life to my father's eyes as we linger a little longer on the deck. He tells me that my brother and I have become much better carpenters than he was. I do not want him to say this--to demean his own skills in this way--but he obviously wants to say it and he says it with pride. I cannot find the words to tell him how much this means to me, but it doesn't seem so important any more. In this moment some old struggle seems finished, and I can now move on. Perhaps he can too. I no longer need a "stand-in." We talk a little about his wonderful friend Clarence, how much he misses him. *I didn't realize how close they were*. He calls it a day and goes off to bed. I am left with my thoughts and feelings and a wonderful renewal of energy.

I take my first job in social work at the age of 20. Frank, a few years older than I, is my first supervisor. Without ever preaching, he models for me how a social worker talks, listens, dresses, thinks about the world. He helps me to get in touch with who I am, and to turn that "self" into strength in social work; this "women's profession." Over time I learn that I can come to that work *as a man*, and that I have something to offer both to women and to men. It is an attractive notion, this idea of an older man guiding a younger man to maturity *as a man*. I neither think about nor theorize it at the time. Nor do I think about or theorize the implications of a man (and a very young man at that) setting out to help women in their roles as mothers. Such thoughts await another time. Bly's idea of the older "male mother," buttressed by Jungian concepts, is an immensely captivating appropriation of the feminine. I no longer need Frank's "mothering," but I feel enormous gratitude for the parts of him that remain for me.

How do young men sort out the older men who are "true" male mothers and worth listening to--from men who are themselves wounded/wounding; those who are, wittingly or not, complicit in the very structures that have caused men and women so much grief? All in all, though, few would want to disagree with the notion that fathers and other older men can offer something important, something special. Bly's next notion, straight out of the essentialist gospel, may be more problematic: "We could say that a third of each person's brain is a warrior brain; a third of our thoughts--whether we like it or not--are warrior thoughts" (p. 150). Bly does not advocate a violent manhood, a literal warrior. We must wonder, though, about the implications of a manhood that *reinscribes* the essential in a gender separatism.

I have a very clear memory of Bill Moyers' interview with Robert Bly (Moyers & Bly, 1990). Bly is a powerful figure, whether he is talking about men, reading his poems, or throwing out random notes on his lute. At the time, it is an immensely impactful program, and for many men it signals the beginning of a men's movement. Bly's open discussion of his relationship with his father, and his poetic expressions of his grief and ultimately his empathy for his father are, for me, the most deeply touching parts. It is really true what he says about the need to "descend" into our grief as men. So much of what men do, it seems, is the vertical, the climbing--and the threat of falling/failing.

Bly essays masterfully. His prose and poetry move his reader smoothly from "real" life to mythology, past to present to past again. There is plenty here that men can identify with. For me, Bly tells enough of his own story to engage me in my own--what more could any essayist hope for? We should be grateful to him for shining the spotlight so clearly on men and men's dilemmas and making manhood a matter of public debate. Hundreds of thousands of men (and, we might suspect, many women hoping to help their men deal with this mysterious unhappiness that seems so often to overtake them) buy his book. Tens of thousands of men flock to workshops. What do they find? Perhaps they find a new affirmation of what it is to be a man; new hope for reconciliation with the father (Bly himself may represent the cultural Father), or at least some peace with what has been; perhaps (and I hesitate to put words to this) someone to hold responsible for what happened or did not. Bly obviously taps into a deep "pond" indeed in saying that men are filled with grief.

The story is told that when the steam engine is invented by some practical genius, the more orthodox scientists of the time say, "It's all very well that it works in practice, but the important question is, does it work in theory?" Indeed, Bly works well, perhaps all too well, *in practice*. Does his view work *in theory*? What are the implications and politics of Bly's essentialist revival? His disclaimer that he is not blaming women/mothers or feminism for the failings of the fathers is all too faint. Even if Bly does not intend to blame women--and in the end I must say that I think he does--he could not be unaware that his work taps a wellspring of resentment if not misogyny within men.

The issue of responsibility is a question unanswered for me in *Iron John*. Theorizing of real manhood and womanhood as "hardwired" is an immensely attractive new/old idea. If we are fulfilling our sex-defined destinies, with minor aberrations caused by events such as industrialization, then we do not have to take responsibility either individually or collectively for the things we do or fail to do. Such a view, in its evocation of essential manhood, ignores so much of history in manhood's constructions of itself. Ultimately, this view calls into question the whole question of social evolution. It wants to look back to a golden age of manhood that never was--or never was unproblematically. Bly appeals, in a time of profound uncertainty for men and manhood, to our desire for the answers of a simpler time. He finds a way to write of his own history and vulnerability in a way that men can identify with. In seeming to problematize woman's behaviors, constructions and contributions, and in seeming to advocate gender apartheid, it ultimately deprives men and society of something very important.

Re-writing Freud.

Helen Chodorow (1978), often cited for her radical reworking of social psychoanalytic thought, proposes a promising new understanding of identity formation. She, like Freud and Erikson, sees the first years of life as critical in laying the groundwork for identity and relation. Though she seeks to deprivilege male experience as the norm for healthy development, she sees clear differences between male and female development:

> Girls tend to remain part of the dyadic primary mother-child relation itself. This means that a girl continues to experience herself as involved in issues of merging and separation, and in an attachment characterized by primary identification and object choice.... A boy has engaged and been required to engage in a more emphatic individuation and a more defensive firming of ego boundaries.... From very early then, because they are parented by a person of the same gender, girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external object world and as differently oriented to their inner object world as well. (pp.166-167)

The son must reject the mother bond in some way while the daughter is able to keep it without repercussion even as she moves toward the father. For the boy, and thence for the man, identity formation requires a strong rejection of all that is perceived to be feminine, a self-definition based on that which he is *not*. This self-definition is to build walls and compartments, to separate the parts of his-self. It is to forever suppress the yearning for re-union and symbiosis with the mother. In Western industrial society, that has more often than not meant that he has to identify with the often-absent and thus rather abstract father, the father who works long hours away from the home, the father who leaves, the father who has not seen his fundamental role as a nurturing or even a mentoring one, the father who does not know what to do or is afraid to do so--even the father who abuses.

Chodorow (1989), in extending her analysis of gender formation, says that girls/women "are," and are in a relatively stable way, while boys/men "do," and must keep doing for all of their lives. That is, "maleness must be re-earned every day" (p. 33). This prepares men for their place in the capitalist production system. It surely also gives rise to a great deal of apprehension, and from this, all too often, a need for control, as Rutherford (1992) says in his review of Chodorow's thought:

> What emerges is a masculinity constructed out of its own ambivalence towards women and intimacy, both needing emotional sustenance but eschewing closeness for the threat it poses to the male subject's sense of separateness. From this psychic constitution arises men's individualistic rationalism and an internal compulsion to seek psychological order through the domination and control of others. (Rutherford, 1992, p. 37)

On the surface of it, Chodorow's new rendering of psychoanalysis is an appealing one. I find that it resonates with my experience. Her formulation is perhaps useful politically in the sense that it turns the psychoanalytic pathologizing of women's development on its head and makes *male* development problematic. Jessica Benjamin (1998) puts the question succinctly: "The question [is] whether to analyze the gender divide in terms of the structural relationship to the phallus, or of the object relation to the mother" (p. 43). But does it, as many critics say, simply replace one essentialism with another? In its attempt to develop a unitary model, it ignores much of the rich, if often troublesome, diversities and shifts in gender constructions. But it is such a clever re-writing of a hegemonic old story that I struggle to see its limitations.

Re-Constituting Cartesian Man

> When asked what remains of Descartes' work in the twentieth century, one modern critic replied: `Everything or nothing, as you like. Nothing of his work. Everything of the Cartesian spirit.' (Koyré, in Vrooman, 1970, p. 260)

This "Cartesian spirit" is almost a mantra for manhood even to day. It is perhaps time to take yet another look at the particular legacy of Cartesian thought in contemporary man's construction of his-Self. Some of the most clear statements linking Cartesian thought to contemporary manhood are to be found in a special issue of the Australian publication, *Dulwich Centre Newsletter* (1992). Chris McLean, Gregory Smith, and Michael White present both the legacy and the possibilities.

McLean says that *"a theoretical understanding of men's pain is of crucial importance to the current men's movement"* (p. 3). While it would seem that contemporary man's beginning acknowledgements of his inner life should be celebrated--and indeed they should be--McLean makes the important point that current discourses about the "equality" of men's and women's suffering and the need to "understand" men (Farrell's essays are perhaps the quintessential example) do not bode well for either gender. Men's denial of their own pain has long been implicated in their oppression of women: "The men's movement needs to address questions of accountability to women as a matter of urgency" (p. 8).

Smith argues that Cartesian dichotomy is still at the center of contemporary constructions of manhood. Smith lists the dichotomies in a tabular form that demonstrates their hierarchical ordering; signifying and emphasizing their relation as a package that, in a "normative and compelling" way, informs men's being and the place of their Others. Such dichotomies can be neither whole nor egalitarian across gender, age, or any other category--one side, quality, or level must always be privileged. It has long been those qualities identified *essentially* with men (the left side of the dichotomy) that are privileged over those identified essentially with women:

Rational versus Emotional
Universal versus Particular
Mind versus Body
Higher versus Lower
Separateness versus Connectedness
Individual versus Collective
Inadequacy versus Development
Person versus Self

Rationality, on the Cartesian account, defines manhood's highest value and his very being. There is always a *versus* on this account--emotions (even one's own, especially one's own perhaps) become the enemy: "*Men, in this view, should be above matter, above nature, and above the world, which was more associated with women*" (p. 10). Supporting the privileging of rationality over emotionality we find "a transcendent position, suggesting that one [man] can stand above the particularities of interaction to see some universal truths" (p. 11). Particularities, the very stuff of daily interaction, become *mere* particularities (often associated with Woman), valued only as they can be seen to support the universal truth. Men are supposed to know truth, and to know it with a clear gaze of certainty and invincibility. The *body* is on this view a mere tool under the control of the mind and the universal truth. Denied though it may be in its corporeality, man's body in its cultural representations is central to power. It is an instrumentalized body, a body focussed on performance, and a body that must always be under its owner's control. It is a body that must "stand alone," upright and invincible, not dependent on relation to Other. It is difficult to locate openings for intimacy in such a body.

The dichotomy of separateness versus connectedness becomes iconic for men, supported by the orthodoxy of androcentric early twentieth-century psychology. The separateness has its roots in the separation of reason and emotion, and the separation of the masculine from the feminine. It is a sovereign separateness of a "free" self. Smith distinguishes the brittle sense of separation in standing alone from the positive possibilities of "healthy autonomy," an autonomy that does not deny connection, self, needs for Other. He makes an interesting point about listening and its connections to asking for help: "If one is meant to be cut off and separate, then *not* listening becomes a virtue, and to actually listen, whether it is to women's experience or to the experience of others, can be seen as a sign of not being separate enough; *the ability to not listen becomes a sign of being a man*" (p. 15) .

For all that men seem so often to work so concertedly in the interests of men, they have a remarkable difficulty in *identifying* with the collective. Related to this difficulty is the difficulty in seeing manhood as something one learns or develops (and changes) over time in a cultural or collective framework rather than something one is or is given. Men hew, Smith says, to the idea of a true masculine: "Somewhere underneath all of this there is a true masculine that should be the true essence of what is a man. In the light of these dichotomies, the 'true' masculine can be seen as another yardstick for insufficiency" (p. 16). It is a phallic yardstick that is surely with many men every day of their lives. The other side of insufficiency for men, Smith shows, is a sense of entitlement and control. Within such a dichotomy we can locate the questions of power, control, and performance that are so often problematic for men and their Others. It can often be a recipe for violence and exploitation.

Sex and sexuality is part of intimacy and connection. When it represents *performance*, it can only bring further separation. Anger represents another separation for men: it is, for men, the only "politically correct" emotion, "linked with enforcing the higher status for men... driven... by a sense of inadequacy or of being shamed as a man" (p. 20). Anger represents the inexpressible emotion/body feeling, a separation of self from body. Man's most painful and problematic separation may not be that of Self from Other-- but of Self from it's- Self:

> There is generally an assumption, when speaking of men, of a negative self. Furthermore, a man must watch himself, in the sense that a man and his self are two separate things. The self may be exposed, showing the insufficiency of not being male enough, by being associated with emotions, body feelings, or other elements which are considered to not be

> sufficiently male.... *Control of the self becomes very important.... [It] remains like some sort of dark mass, dark force, or untamed animal which lurks underneath.* (pp. 16-17)

Smith expresses in a compelling way the Cartesian separation of man not only from Other but from Self. White extends this analysis of what he calls "foundationalist" thought, and introduces a Foucauldian thread: "In the history of foundationalist thought the physical, biological, social and psychological sciences have all been spectacularly successful in the manufacture of global, unitary and timeless 'truths' about nature and about culture" (p. 35). Such thought is built, he says, on three assumptions: *objectivity, essentialism*, and *representationalism.* He singles out the "essentialist project" for particular attention, focussing on its goal of "justifying the oppression and disenfranchisement of women, of children, and of other races... gay and other minority groups" (p. 36). He is very clear on the effects of this project, listing his arguments in compelling and staccato fashion:

> - It privileges a particular knowledge of so-called 'authentic,' 'real,' or 'masculine' ways of being that we must learn from other men.... Other knowledges and practices of men's ways of being are marginalized and discriminated against, and thus rendered unavailable for our consideration.
>
> - It is inherently conservative and provocative of a paralysing form of nostalgia for what never was.... It recruits us into a mythopoetic account of men's nature. This renders it virtually impossible for us to recognize the critical role that these very myths have played in the constitution and justification of men's culture in the first place.
>
> - It enables us to avoid the moral and ethical implications of and responsibility for, what we think and what we do.
>
> - To the extent that [it] references behavior to a self that is considered to be an underlying, fundamental, precious and somewhat fragile entity, it encourages men to interpret many of their cruel and destructive actions as responses to threats to this self.... [In its] preoccupation with biological, genetic, and psychological explanations for the predicament in which men are finding themselves, it can deny us historical and political analysis of this predicament.

- In emphasizing a notion of the repressed masculinity... [it] renders invisible to us the processes of power associated with the more disembodied ways of speaking.... [It] blinds men to the degree to which identity is something that is negotiated and distributed in communities of persons and within the institutions of our culture.

- [In providing] for a radical distinction between men and women in terms of their essence... it incites men to separate from and to distance from... mothers, daughters, partners and other women.... It inevitably locates identity in anatomy. In so doing, it prescribes for us a preoccupation with genitalia, and contributes to the phallocentrism of men's culture.

- [Its] construction of a 'battle of' or 'war between' the sexes is a ruse that blurs the power differential, conserves the status quo, and burdens women with equal responsibility in the creation of a state of affairs that they have not been free to partake equally in.

White puts forth a provocative antidote to this view that he calls *constitutionalist*:

> Constitutionalism brings with it the proposition that, upon entering into life in the social world, persons become engaged in particular modes of life and thought or, according to Foucault (1979, 1980, 1984), particular practices of power and technologies of the self, and knowledges about life that have achieved or been granted a truth status.... *These practices, technologies, and knowledges have been negotiated over time within contexts of communities of persons and institutions that comprise culture*. (p. 40)

On this view, the Self is multi-sited, contradictory, and dilemmatic:

> Identity is an outcome of the negotiation of various subjectivities.... Identity is 'dilemmatic' (see Billig et al. 1988). Further, in that these considerations provide for a dynamic account of identity, they propose an account of identity that is ever available to contestation, renegotiation, and change... informed by a criterion of narrative coherence" (after Bruner & Bruner).... *These personal narratives are not reflections of lives as they are lived, but narratives that are actually constitutive of life*.... So, although personal narratives are shaping of persons' lives, there is a certain indeterminacy to them--one which emphasizes the role of agency and of the subject in the constitution of one's life. (p. 41)

Man, then, is a critical subject, "a subject that is capable of negotiating various subjectivities and contradictions, managing contingencies, and filling the gaps that arise in personal narrative . . . . In the process of living one's life, the subject is transformed" (p. 42). Such transformation, White says, is "partisan" and deeply political in the sense that certain ways of acting and thinking are "privileged," while others are "marginalized or disqualified." It is these *marginalized or disqualified* ways that must interest us if we are to reach new understandings of men-in-relation. Such a perspective could free men in a number of ways by:

> - Mitigating against the fabrication of unitary and global 'truths' about men's nature... so-called 'authentic' or 'real' masculine ways of being that we must learn from other men.
>
> - Opening space for... rival observations and knowledges from the outside.
>
> - Resisting the incitement to police our lives, bodies and souls in the pursuit of 'authentic' masculinity.
>
> - Enabling us to break free of the paralysing nostalgia for those forms of relationship between men that never were.
>
> - Discouraging us from engaging in the sort of mental gymnastics that spur theories of the 'power of the powerless.'
>
> - Rendering visible to us the processes of power associated with disembodied speech forms.
>
> - Freeing us from the sort of projects of self that give rise to isolated and impoverished individualities.
>
> - Provoking us to dismantle the juxtaposition of men's and women's natures, thus dissolving the imperative for men to separate from women. (p. 43)

White is quite relentless in his efforts to challenge the dominant order in its more repressive aspects. He takes direct aim at Bly's mythopoesis by challenging the hegemony of the nostalgic hearkening to a historical authenticity. He does so, however, with Foucauldian awareness of the ways in which persons embody the cultural order; working to help people turn the cultural stories embodied within them inside out and develop a new sense of self and agency. It is interesting to see how he implements such ideas very explicitly in his therapeutic work with men, though that is perhaps beyond the scope of this discussion.

White essays in a fashion which has become his trademark: relentless parallel constructions of his points, careful and explicit avoidance of generalizations and categories, and a grounding in the lives of real men's and women's lives (he is not only a thinker but a noted therapist). What, then, does he say to men about intimacy? One of his more important notions is that men are accountable to those they have cast as Other. Men are not only accountable to women, to men of color, to gay men, to children, among others--they need the perspectives that Other can offer. The search for *a* unitary manhood will only serve to perpetuate man's domination of "his" world and the subjugation of his feeling self. The constitutionalist perspective is a reflexive one, an explicitly political one, and a "just" one (White calls his therapy "just therapy"). When men can understand how they have constituted themselves, they are able to envision exciting re-constitutions that open them to intimacy with others.

Synopsis

One might fairly observe that I have an ambivalent relationship with essentialism and its "excesses." Some contemporary essentialist projects such as Farrell's and Bly's are excessive indeed, which is not so much to suggest that they have nothing worthwhile to offer but that their political projects (though obvious enough) are problematic and unacknowledged. Both of these men damn women with the faintest of praise, but both in fact blame women for issues that are, in my view, clearly men's responsibility. This is not, on my account, to place women in a position of helpless victims waiting for rescue (I hope I am past that point in my thinking), but rather to question our whole notion of blame and responsibility/response-ability for issues of relation. Neither gives an adequate or a even a fair reading of power and male hegemony. *But they do speak for many men.* Bly's project, in particular, often works well in practice (that is, it resonates for men) though rarely in theory. Both are masterful essayists.

White's work offers a refreshing new anti-essentialist "take" on manhood that works in practice and in theory. White signals the last gasp of Cartesian manhood. His, too, is in the end an essentialist project, much as he is careful to qualify each statement with "some men, sometimes." He comes closest, of the men currently writing about men, to a praxis of manhood that could bring men to a just intimacy. It is a praxis that takes account of male hegemony and male pain and impotence, and insists on a *just* and accountable relation with "his" Others: women, children, the diverse manhoods that are evolving today, men of color. Men can cry but not hit or whine on this account.

Chapter Seven

RE-PRESENTING MAN

Revisiting Representation

Cultural productions may be, as their producers will claim, "entertainment"; it is perhaps that very claim that obscures both their reactionary and innovative social roles. What may be even more obscured is their possibilities as "writerly" texts that involve their readers, and the processes by which their producers "read" their audiences. Robert Hanke's (1998) article, *Theorizing Masculinity Within the Media,* captures several important shifts in contemporary research on masculinity in mass communication:

- Attention [has shifted] from what Fejes calls 'masculinity as fact' to the *facticity of masculinity....* We have come to understand masculinity as 'both a *product and process* of representation' (citing de Lauretius, p. 183)

- Some scholars have adopted a feminist poststructuralist orientation to '*masculinity as signs*,' where masculinity is regarded as one of the subjectivities... that make up our social identities.... Today, as Hall... observes, the 'body serves to function as the signifier of the condensation of subjectivities in the individual' (pp. 183-184).

- We should no longer presume a relationship between masculinity and men.... What is to be done if there is no definition of masculinity that is not already hegemonic (Rogoff & Van Leer, 1993), no gender trouble (whether as spectacle, masquerade, or parody) that 'would push the masculine stereotype beyond *its* threshold of recuperation' (citing Massumi, p. 184).

Hanke's review provokes me to think beyond my rather reductionist accounts of Cartesian Man's hegemony; though in spite of solitary man's plaintive pleas that "I have no power or privilege," it would be premature to pronounce the hegemonic project finished or even on the ropes. Hanke adds a cautionary note to thicken our understanding of hegemony: "A hegemonic project... does not demand the production of consensus... nor a process of incorporation. *It does operate through* *the production of a certain convergence of interests through which subordination and resistance are contained"* (citing Grossberg, p. 185). Representations of gay men, for example, are permitted but contained by a "heteromasculine point of view" (p. 186). The same might be said of androgynous representations and representations of "other" masculinities signified by race and ethnicity.

What are ordinary men watching on television when they are not channel-surfing? What sense do they make of the media representations of male power and hegemony *vis-à-vis* their relations with the person watching with them or putting the kids to bed? What of marginalized masculinities? If we move forward from a unitary view (Stewart [1991], for example, advocates treating power and intimacy as a *continuum*) it becomes necessary to return to de Lauretius' point about masculinity as *product and process:* we must ask how media images of masculinity constitute the viewer's power and how that viewer's power constitutes media images of masculinity. Of course, we must not miss the fact that women are also viewers of the same stuff--they also constitute, and they also have power. Sedgwick in fact says, in her usual provocative way, "Sometimes masculinity has got nothing to do with it. Nothing to do with men" (p. 184). "This thing is bigger than all of us," certainly bigger than man.

Laura Mulvey's (1975) pioneering work on the male gaze and the absence of the nude male body in cinema is enriched by emerging and contrasting work such as Nixon's study of representations of the male body and the creation of new subject positions in fashion photography. Things are changing, it seems. Heterosexually-identified men are no longer so adverse to gazing at *male* bodies (though they may still claim to buy magazines "for the articles"). "Advertising and fashion photography are a technique for 'sanctioning the display of masculine sensuality and... opening up the possibility of an ambivalent masculine sexual identity" (citing Nixon, in Hanke, p. 188). Men are bombarded with advertisements of fashion, adornments, and perfumes (not to mention other manly "lifestyle" products such as sport utility vehicles). Obviously men do buy these products. They must surely articulate such purchases in some fashion to an acceptable version of manhood. But it gets more difficult to identity any unitary acceptable version.

I mention earlier Kaivola's point about the appropriation of androgyny by capitalism, and my question about how a hegemonic masculinity makes sense of such a *seemingly* subversive identity position. Capitalism is very skilled in marketing the idea of individual self-expressions within the contradictions of brand name culture and the injunction to be one's "own man," master of the virtual and off-road environments and the urban jungle. Hanke makes the important point that the very concept of consumption is no longer so aligned with the feminine. Men are prepared to buy fashion and adornments for themselves. He also points out the increased visibility of gay men in advertising, and their definition as "economic subjects" rather than as "extensions of civil rights" (p. 189). Money always talks.

Unfortunately this may not signal the end of hegemonic masculinity as much as its resiliency. Consensus on a unitary masculinity is ever more unlikely today amidst the power of advertising and changing representations of sexualities, my conspiracy theories aside-- *nor is it necessary*. When we see masculinity as discursive construction, not to mention a marketing challenge and consumer "decision," masculinity is apt to have less and less to do with men as we have thought Man. Masculinity may indeed have more to do with a sophisticated industry skilled in manufacturing "figures to identify with and places to occupy within the gender order.... *Masculinity becomes impossible to define apart from its relationship to femininity and its articulation to sexualities*" (pp. 189-190). Is a moment of reckoning at hand, a moment when man will have to acknowledge his debts? Perhaps not yet, for hegemonic masculinity is still remarkably adept at co-opting difference "Within global [read Western] postmodern cultural productions, *hegemonic masculinities are 'constructed through, not outside, difference,' for without the Other, there would be no Same*" (citing Hall, p. 197). Difference is thus "domesticated" (citing Willis, p. 194).

Is it all just an *act*, a performance? Judith Butler (1990) suggests an anti-essentialist account of gender: "gender as a 'corporeal style, an "act," as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where "performative" suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning'" (cited in Hanke, p. 190). Hanke cites mock-macho sitcoms (*Home Improvement* immediately comes to mind) and men-in-drag sitcoms as examples of Butler's "hyperbolic conformity" to gender norms. Does such gender-as-*impersonation* subvert essentialism? Is hegemonic manhood still sitting back "laughing" at the acts, or whistling bravely in the dark? Though I find such possibilities provocative, I am left with a more mundane question about agency. Where are there places, amidst the hegemonic "containment" of media and brand-name manhoods, for ordinary men to express their subversive stories, their resistances, the "hysterical [moments that lie] outside of phallic organization" (citing Smith in Hanke, p. 193)? Or is such resistance futile: "*A major issue is how hegemonic masculinities are refurbished, reempowered, renegotiated, and reenvisioned.... Patriarchy reforms masculinity to meet the next historical turn, to regain the* *pleasure of reinforcing the norm, to fit the social climate, or to articulate the new racism*" (p. 193).

Despite this rather gloomy scenario, Hanke does conclude his article on a cautiously optimistic note, hoping for the "destabilization of singularity in perspective" (citing Spitzack, p. 200). He invokes Gramsci, though, to say that though "the old is dying... the new cannot be born" (p. 200). Not just yet.

Male Subjectivity at the Margins

> This book is dedicated to the exploration of some 'deviant' masculinities-- masculinities whose defining desires and identifications are 'perverse' with respect not so much to a moral as to a phallic standard. It will attempt to demonstrate that these masculinities represent a tacit challenge not only to conventional male subjectivity, but to the whole of our `world'-- that they call sexual difference into question, and beyond that, 'reality' itself. (Silverman, 1992, p. 1)

Silverman's opening statement sets out an ambitious challenge indeed. It is perhaps time to explore in a more serious way the symbolic "world" of man's subjectivity, the world of language/language of world. Lacanian psychoanalysis promises to do so, but it denies historicity and the material. Critical theory promises to do, but it leaves gaps in subjectivity. Both views would claim essential status as Laws of the Oedipal/Capital Father. Silverman, in synthesizing the thought of Lacan and Althusser toward a notion of manhood as a "dominant fiction," will help me to negotiate the "checkpoints of the knowledge industry" in a somewhat less Modern and certainly less Cartesian way--there is much yet to be said about manhood's ideological construction.

Silverman defines the "dominant fiction" in which we/men are asked to believe:

> [I] will theorize the ideological reality through which we 'ideally' live both the symbolic order and the mode of production as the 'dominant fiction,' and [I] will posit the positive Oedipus complex as the primary vehicle of insertion into that reality.... This book will isolate a historical moment at which the equation of the male sex organ with the phallus could no longer be sustained, and it will show *the disjuncture of those two terms to have led to a collective loss of belief in the whole dominant fiction.* (Silverman, 1992, p. 2)

Why does Silverman choose to focus on *male* subjectivity and in particular on deviant masculinities as exemplars of the dominant fiction? What is the big lie about?

> The masculinities which this book will interrogate, and even in certain instances work to eroticise or privilege, are those which not only acknowledge but embrace *castration, alterity, and specularity*. Although these attributes represent the unavoidable tropes of all subjectivity, they generally feature prominently only within the conscious existence of the female subject. *Conventional masculinity is largely predicated upon their denial.* Saying 'no' to [the power of a Foucauldian deployment of sexuality] necessarily implies achieving some kind of reconciliation with these structuring terms, and hence with femininity. *It means... the collapse of that system of fortification whereby sexual difference is secured, a system dependent upon projection, disavowal, and fetishism.* (p. 3)

But man wants an essence, "hard" facts about the world and his-self. He wants more than Lacan's "reels on reels" of language. He dare not, just yet, say no to power. The Lacanian Self is a self radically split:

> Lacan often refers to the ego as the *moi*, since for him it is that which is responsible for the production of identity or a "me." He also means thereby to distinguish it as object from the *je* or "I," which is for him the subject proper, i.e. the desiring subject. The *moi* is the psychic 'precipitate' of external images, ranging from the subject's mirror image and the parental imagos to the whole plethora of textually based representations which each of us imbibes daily. *What the subject takes to be its 'self' is thus both other and fictive*. (p. 3)

No-thing is ever what it appears, and this is nowhere more true than in Lacan's thought. Silverman's next statement cuts the very ground from under Modern man. It is a "melancholy" picture indeed. How will man fill the void?

> *Lack of being [then] is the irreducible condition of subjectivity.* In acceding to language, the subject forfeits all existential reality, and foregoes any future possibility of 'wholeness'.... [Lacan] adds that this subject has no ego, that it is indeed antipathetic to the ego. It speaks, but with '*the voice of no one*.' This subject, which Lacan calls the '*je*,' is devoid both of form and of object; it can perhaps best be defined as pure lack, and hence as 'desire for nothing'.... *The self, in other words, fills the void at the center of subjectivity with an illusory plenitude*. (pp. 4-5)

Silverman's account of the fictive and illusory "self" stands in stark contrast to the Cartesian account, and even the Montaignean one. The Cartesian Self stands alone, arbiter of what is real and certain within his horizon. The Montaignean Self, though it may pays more homage to the culture that is to be found within every man, is still a self quite sure of its foundations at any given moment in its unfolding. Rembrandt's Self is open to what the world has to offer through the years, though at any given moment he wants to claim that he knows who he is (outlandish hats, helmets and other accoutrements aside). For all that, in all three accounts men still stand alone; often seeming to struggle to become intimate with the *moi*, to know and to dare to know their "real self," not to mention dare to show that self to the world. But on Lacan's account the Self is "devoid, illusory"--it can only "find" itself in Other.

Many men today sense that something has gone wrong with the order of things that defines and informs them as men. But the core of the fiction tells them that they must deal with the malaise them-selves, they must acknowledge a debt to no one/Other. The essentialists would tell them that they simply need more of the old stuff to get back into balance and restore their position in the world. Above all, the fiction must never be exposed. The illusion of plentitude is sustained only in relation to externalizing the feminine as "lack" (of the phallus). An identity constituted from and within such ideology is a shifting identity indeed. Men insist on its enduring or essential quality at their peril: "*Our entire 'world,' then, depends upon the alignment of phallus and penis* . . . . In order for ideology to command belief, then, it must extend itself into the deepest reaches of the subject's identity and unconscious desire" (pp. 15-16).

"Classic" masculinity is, on this account, founded upon a belief in this "alignment. Conversely, such belief is central to ideology's construction. Althusser says such belief is unconscious, though he would not locate it in the psyche as would Lacan. Beliefs are performed nonetheless: "Ideological belief, in other words, occurs at the moment when an image which the subject consciously knows to be culturally fabricated nevertheless succeeds in being recognized as a 'pure naked perception of reality'" (citing Althusser, p. 17). How does man make sense of such a cultural story that he "knows" to be a fiction? The fiction must somehow pass muster in the furthest (deeper) reaches of the self:

> My project is to show that it is only by successfully defining what passes for 'reality' at the level of the psyche [identity] that ideology can be said to command the subject's belief.... Let us attempt to take Althusser at his word when he tells us both that '*the*

> *category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology,' and that 'ideology has the function (which defines it) of "constituting" concrete individuals as subjects.'* (pp. 21-23)

Subjectivity is constructed on a massive and hegemonic fiction, "dominant" in that it is sanctioned by society's recognition and promulgated, Rancière says, through the Law and expressed through "the images and stories through which a society figures consensus; images and stories which cinema, fiction, popular culture, and other forms of mass representation presumably both draw upon and help to shape" (p. 30). The matter of the *recognition* of this fiction/Law requires a massive denial indeed. I think of a house of cards, standing tall and phallus-like, ready, in a flash, to tumble down. But such a metaphor is surely wrong, for manhood has managed to buttress itself well and relocate its vulnerabilities, its radical Lack, outside it(him)self: "*Female subjectivity represents the site at which the male subject deposits his lack....* It is imperative that belief in the penis/phallus equation be fortified... for it represents the most vulnerable component of the dominant fiction" (p. 46).

How might we/man renegotiate such a complex and seemingly intractable set of interlocking constructions, the Law of language, the phallus? Woman knows intimately that which the male subject must deny; deny on pain of his very manhood: "the defining conditions of all subjectivity, conditions which the female subject is obliged compulsively to reenact, but upon the denial of which traditional masculinity is predicated: lack, specularity, and alterity" (pp. 50-51). Silverman interrogates a moment of "historical trauma" when man's denial breaks down; that *"which brings a large group of male subjects into such an intimate relation with lack that they are at least for the moment unable to sustain an imaginary relation with the phallus, and so withdraw their belief from the dominant fiction" (p. 55).* The moment is at the end of World War II as the men return from the front, as it is captured in *The Best Years of our Lives*. Man, and the "social formation," find themselves suddenly "without consensus" (p. 55).

War is, at its apex (at least in its public manifestations) a stunning display of hypermasculinity. At its depth, it reflects a profound vulnerability. Just as man must deny the "void" that constitutes his identity, he must also deny the ultimate void of war: "The normative male ego is necessarily fortified against any knowledge of the void upon which it rests, and-- as its insistence upon an unimpaired bodily 'envelope' would suggest-- fiercely protective of its coherence" (p. 61). If war is a void and a waste of men, it is also a laying waste to manhood. The moment of incoherence comes in the moment when the last shot is fired:

> The traumatized veteran no longer enjoys the support of his comrades-in-arms. All that stands between him and the abyss is the paternal imago, within which he can no longer recognize himself. For the society to which he returns, moreover, he represents a sorry travesty of 'our fighting men and boys,' a living proof of the incommensurability of penis and phallus.... *The Best Years of our Lives* [speaks] as well to a second historical trauma threatening.... masculinity--that posed by a social formation which had proven itself capable of managing without the absent soldier, in part by mobilizing a female workforce. (pp. 63-64)

The pain of the traumatized veterans in *The Best Years of our Lives* is palpable. They are suddenly and unaccountably without place either in family or social order--and thus without a place in masculinity. Castration is all too palpably represented in the bank executive who can neither relate to his family nor make tough decisions, the man who has lost both hands, the man who cannot get an important job and thus cannot "hold" his excitement-seeking wife. Each man manifests both a personal crisis of agency and belief, and a broader rupture in the dominant fiction. The pain of war and the death the film represents is both visceral-genital and ideological. As I watch the film, fully expecting an "all ends well in love" kind of yarn, I struggle to make sense of woman's place and role in the masculinity crisis. She does not play the nurturing, "make it better" role (often expressed as her responsibility to protect the "fragile male ego") that I expect to see. She does stand by, trying to understand. But the men are on their own with themselves and with each other. She has her own profound adjustments to make, and she cannot understand his. It is in this moment not her "lack" but his lack and apprehended terror that dominates.

Silverman's conclusion on this point is cryptic; resonating with Chodorow's account of boys' gender-learning of the "not feminine," which I now want to reframe as "the lack," the absence *in Man*: "My wish is that every subject's encounter with the death drive might become in time more of an everyday occurrence--that the typical male subject, like his female counterpart, *might learn to live with lack"* (p. 65). It is now more than 50 years since the end of World War II. The Vietnam War and the Gulf War have started and ended in that period. Has man come any closer to living with lack, to owning and even embracing it?

Silverman goes on to interrogate other marginal manhoods. I choose not to pursue her thesis at further length, but her example of male *masochism* does merit mention as a paradigm case of marginality. In his pursuit of pleasure through pain, the male masochist radically disrupts the believability of the dominant fiction. He does so, according to Silverman, in a way "organized by what [he] subverts"; that is, the phallic order (p. 186). "*[He] leaves his social identity completely behind--actually abandons his 'self'--and passes over into the 'enemy territory' of femininity*" (after Reik, p. 190):

> The male masochist... acts out in an insistent and exaggerated way the basic conditions of cultural conditions of cultural subjectivity, conditions that are normally disavowed; he loudly proclaims that his meaning comes from the Other, prostrates himself before the gaze even as he solicits it, exhibits his castration for all to see, and revels in the sacrificial basis of the social contract..... [He refuses] to be sutured or recompensed. In short, he radiates a negativity inimitable to the social order. (p. 206)

"What is beaten in masochism is... not so much the male subject as the father, *or the father in the male subject*. Masochism works insistently to negate paternal power and privilege" (p. 211).

> Deleuze asserts that masochism proceeds from a twofold disavowal, a positive idealizing disavowal of the mother (who is identified with the law), and an invalidating disavowal of the father (who is expelled from the symbolic order).... The masochism he celebrates is a pact between the mother and son to write the father out of his dominant position within both culture and masochism, and to instill the mother in his place. (p. 211)

Silverman says in her review of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's films that they are "a virtual showcase for male masochism... *committed to the utter ruination of masculinity*. At the same time they make the process of experiencing and observing that ruination conducive of a pleasure bordering on ecstasy" (p. 213). What are the consequences of masculinity's "ruination," of the exposing of the dominant fiction? It is a spectacle that sends hegemonic Man to the ideological ramparts, desperate to defend the Oedipal Father against all comers. It is a doomed battle, but it will still be along one.

Transvaluing Phallic Masculinity

As I sit reflecting on these questions, a familiar scene unfolds down my street. To me, interested as I am in the construction of houses and masculinity, it is a familiar drama; but I never tire of watching each new enactment. I take time out to watch each new development as the day unfolds. We are having a mild spell in the middle of a long winter, so the time was opportune last week to demolish and haul away the old house. Today the *œuvre* begins to rise from the earth; long envisioned by its future inhabitants, translated to lines and specifications by its designer, carefully costed by its builder.

The concrete contractor arrives with a trailer-load of forms and fresh lumber in tow. His men arrive in pickup trucks a bit before 8:00 a.m.; giving them time to swap coded greetings, pour hot coffee from thermoses, light up cigarettes, and survey the site of their day's work. The men head down into the excavation with level and tape to begin laying out the footings. A little later, the Bobcat operator pulls up, unloads his machine, and heads onto the site to drill pilings. Later in the morning, with precision timing, the Bobcat pulls out just in time for the concrete truck to back down into the basement to pour footings. All the while, retired men from the neighborhood stop by to inspect the proceeding and to pay respects to their *compadres* by nodding or exchanging a word or two. One does not waste words at such a time, though there is a running dialogue among the workers about things instrumental (or so it seems). One also keeps on the move, for it is cold and the job needs to move along on schedule.

For a few moments, all thought of analysis leaves me and I am transported back to earlier times. I get in touch with the feelings of power and connectedness to the cosmos that one feels when doing such "honest work" to bring earth and materials to submission/creation. I feel moved by the magnificance of the sight/site of men working shoulder to shoulder in perfect communion to "get the job done." Could anything be wrong with this magnificent picture of instrumental bodies working in perfect harmony in this quintessential male space? Is *intimacy* a problematic in this moment of being? Is *power* problematic? Is man's *body* problematic? The "plain men" on job-site # 712 would say no to all of these questions, no to any notion of emptiness.

James Nelson's (1988) *The Intimate Connection* is a ground-breaking one for its time at the opening of what will later be called the "men's movement." Nelson blows the whistle on the issue of men's difficulties in intimate relation, linking these difficulties to their separation of sexuality from spirituality and their privileging of the phallus as representation of all that is male. He brings a theological analysis to bear on a psychoanalytic model in what has become a standard reading:

> Male genitalization seems to encourage men to prize the qualities of hardness, upness, and linearity.... Erection is pleasure and potency, necessary for sexual 'success,' and the erection mentality is projected upon the world and what seems to be valuable in it.... Men also honor straightness and linearity. To be sexually straight for a male in a homophobic

> society is crucial to being a real man.... *It is no accident that male spirituality ... has been more inclined toward ladders than toward circles.* (p. 37).

On this account, men's very construction of identity is antithetical to intimacy:

> Masculinity is early defined by what it is not [the feminine]. Intimacy now becomes a threat to the male's struggle for masculine identity. The very thing that he craves, the thing all persons need for nourishing life itself, is a problem. He has established his tenuous hold on masculinity through separation and boundary-making, and emotional closeness threatens that precarious grip.... But in the meantime, if he is to hold onto what manhood he has, he must settle for separation as the basic reality. 'It's just the way things are.' (p. 42)

Your masculinity or your connection. This incommensurability of phallic masculinity and intimacy seems so obvious that we have to wonder why it is still denied by so many men. Traditional spirituality supports the denial in the name of a judgement of sin and redemption rather than an affirmation of goodness. On Nelson's account the Via Negativa, the way of "emptying and being emptied" (represented in the flaccid penis), and the Via Positiva, "the way of being filled by the sacred fullness and rising to the divine height"(represented in the erect phallus), *need each other*. "Men often resist these things. But sinking and emptying are as necessary to the spirit's rhythms as they are to the genitals" (p. 96). Man needs to re-value the penis. But how is man to embrace "emptiness" in the service of the fullness of intimacy with another? Must he renounce phallic masculinity? What are the consequences of such renunciation?

As my historical review shows with tiresome predictability, manhood defines itself stridently in terms of the *not*; the not-feminine, yes, but in the same breath, not-body (body and the feminine are often aligned to facilitate the denial). Phallic power is always located within the invisibility, within its gaze that totalizes Other but evades such publicity for itself. Its power inheres precisely in its invisibility and in the "dominant fiction" of commensurability of penis-phallus. jagodzinski (1998) argues: "It is precisely when the penis-phallus connection is hidden from view that patriarchy is most centered. Today it is becoming decentered. Exposing the connection results in male hysteria--a 'scrum' to search for a new veil for the phallus to hide under " (p. 3).

Justad commends for our consideration a notion of *transvaluation*: "to value on a different basis; to evaluate according to a novel principle, especially one which repudiates conventional or accepted standards." (Webster). He draws on Flannigan Saint-Aubin's turn to the testes as focus for a new masculinity. It is interesting that men have so denied the *vulnerability* of the testes--to say a man has "balls" is the ultimate compliment about his courage, his guts, his status as a real man. Will men be able and willing to risk such transvaluation, such a move toward connection, such a reconciliation of the dialectics that are at the core of masculine identity? The same hegemonic order that creates, sustains, and markets the global capitalist/consumer/ narcissistic/aggressive society jagodzinski names--is the very order that bemoans the erosion of "family values" and traditional morality.

Surrounding himself with information technologies, new (instantly obsolete) toys, ever more sophisticated languages, manufactured authenticities--I could go on but should not--consumer man wonders where all the joy has gone and where "real" life can be found again. And yet, he is exhorted to buy more, consume more, go faster. On jagodzinski's Lacanian account, the Anal Father actually *commands* more and more (empty) enjoyment: "[Lacan says] 'enjoyment is always the enjoyment of the Other,' that is, enjoyment only exists insofar that it is posited in the Other, as the other's enjoyment" (pp. 9-10). jagodzinski links a rise in aggressivity (witness the phenomena of "road rage" and schoolyard massacres), a decline in civility, unprecedented competition in the classroom, and a decline in friendship to the notion of Other as "a potential thief of one's enjoyment" (p. 9). As we might expect, the entertainment industry is implicated up to its ears-- in promoting the pleasure-seeking, yet in "calling back the Oedipal Father to assert his moral task" (p. 11).

It is a confusing time for manhood, and for all of us. It is a confusing time for intimacy. If man is exhorted to consume, to enjoy, he is also exhorted to be intimate. If he does not know how, there are many psychologists willing to tell him. The self-help books offer formulas that will be quick and simple, if not fun. Do they, yet, expose the dominant fiction for what it is?

Running Scared

> As Barbara de Genevieve so succinctly notes while commenting on the double standard of nudity surrounding the male and female body, 'to unveil the penis is to unveil the phallus is to unveil the social construction of masculinity. And *that* is the real taboo.' (cited in Lehman, 1993, p. 5)

Lehman chooses the evocative title of one of Roy Orbison's most popular songs, *Running Scared*, as the title for his book on the representation of the male body in popular culture. The terms of his post-Mulveyan analysis of the problem of the male body will by now be very familiar. The problem is captured in de Genevieve's cryptic statement. Woman, on Lehman's account, as on Sedgwick's, serves particular symbolic functions for men and manhood not only as object of the male gaze but also as *sign* to divert man's anxieties about maintaining the erectness of the phallus, the hard and brittle heterosexual order:

> 'One of the primary functions of the female presence is to serve as a sign-to others and to oneself-- that looking at erections, even finding them sexy, does not mean that the viewer defines himself as a homosexual'.... Freud's work on paranoia and homosexuality implicates all heterosexual men in issues central to this study. Freud claimed that a man can transform the initial proposition ‘I love him' into four different variations: ‘I do not love him-- I hate him'; I don't love men-- I love women'; ‘I don't love at all-- I love only myself'; and ‘It is not I who love the man-- she loves him.' *These variations deny and repress the original love for the man and replace it with hatred for the man, womanizing, self-love, or jealousy.* (citing Macdonald; p. 22)

Lehman supports his point convincingly by citing a multitude of examples from films that center men and yet go to great lengths to hide their genitals from view. Men's bodies are, indeed, the "dark continent":

> *I will repeatedly confront the following paradox: In a patriarchal culture, when the penis is hidden, it is centered.* To show, write, or talk about the penis creates the potential to demystify it and thus decenter it. Indeed, the awe surrounding the penis in a patriarchal culture depends on either keeping it hidden from sight... or carefully regulating its representation.... The dominant representations of phallic masculinity in our culture depend on keeping the male body and the genitals out of the critical spotlight. (p. 28)

"It is no exaggeration to say that men under patriarchy are not just empowered by their privileged position through the penis-phallus; they are also profoundly alienated from their own bodies, which are lost beneath its monstrosity. No wonder they are so often running scared" (p. 36). Why must such alienation and fear be denied language and voice? Language represents the symbolic order, Name-of-the-Father. "Neither men nor women, as Chris Holmlund reminds us, can *possess* the phallus, and in this sense masculinity is itself a masquerade" (p. 9). Man must deny the masquerade every day of his life. It is maintained in/by the able, invulnerable and instrumentally powerful body, by male silence, and by assigning particular roles to Other (most often Woman). Lehman illustrates this with a classic scene from *Rio Bravo*:

> At times Feathers cannot get Chance [John Wayne] to say what she wants and is frustrated and angered by his silence, as in the famous last scene where Chance threatens to arrest her if she performs in public in a skimpy outfit. When she joyously blurts out that she thought he would never say it, he asks, "Say what?" "That you love me," she replies. "I said I'd arrest you," he responds, and she, in an oft-quoted line, says, "*It means the same thing.*" (p. 59)

The scene speaks not only to a Chance's, and other men's, power and silence on questions of the "heart"/body, but also to women's place in the relation. His power only has meaning in relation to Woman. His very close relationship with his male cronies must, whether explicitly or in "absent presence," invoke women. If a woman wants "intimacy" (on the Modern account at any rate), she must use her power/language of "femininity" to cajole him to "open up," and then--leaving no stone unturned-- she must translate "man" language into "intimate" language for him and for herself. Women can speak, but they must speak "slant" (Emily Dickinson's word) so as not to threaten male order. We cannot be sure--and Chance will not and likely cannot tell us-- whether his spare and indirect language is about maintaining the "masquerade" of masculinity, or about not having the words. If it is one, of course, it is apt also to be the other. It is evident that, comfortable as he is in his male world of gun duels with shadowy "bad guys," he is quite thrown by this demand for something more of himself.

It is difficult to see how such disparate functions of Woman can be reconciled with anything resembling intimacy. Women know this and surely feel the frustration of it, it seems, but men are afraid to know it:

> In these films [*Rio Bravo, Scarface, Rio Lobo*], the women's silence marks their position on the periphery of power; they do not speak because they are excluded from decision-making. The men's silence stems from their excess of power; they do not talk much because their actions speak louder than words. Indeed, within such a world, men who talk too much are marked as weak. (p. 58)

The theme of denial continues in more contemporary film, though in seemingly more open form. Penis size jokes are allowed, even ubiquitous, it seems. What is missing, Lehman points out, is the point-of-view shot that would objectify the male body from the woman's point of view: "In place of the logical objectification of the male body, we have the fetishistic objectification of the woman who looks. Her very desire or contempt for what we never see becomes fetishized" (p. 123). Yet again we see that when the penis is most hidden, it is most centered. The "taboo" is maintained.

Lehman has long been a fan of Roy Orbison's music. He devotes his final chapter to an unpacking of Orbison's representations of manhood. Orbison captures in a most unique way the powerful duality that is manhood's construction. Immediately upon reading Lehman's sympathetic treatment of Orbison and his music, I feel compelled to get the video of Orbison's 1988 concert, *Roy Orbison & Friends: A Black and White Night* (it is filmed entirely in black and white, near the end of Orbison's life). The ambiance of 'The Voice' has stuck with me since the 1960's, but I have never been so attentive to the lyrics of pain and the possible identity of the mystery man singing them as I am at this moment, sitting alone watching this tribute concert. Though some of Orbison's "friends" are women, my first impression is that they are intended to be mere backup singers (seen but not heard, or is it heard but not seen?). But no, women play a vital role here, not only in signifying Orbison's lyrics of love desired and lost, but more crucially in making the male homosocial bond/band acceptable.

The contrasts between Orbison's shadowy and unexpressive physical self, and the motifs and emotional power of his music, are striking. Bruce Springsteen once said he felt like he could reach out and put his hand through Orbison's body. In this concert, Springsteen and Elvis Costello periodically act the male peacocks/rockers; trying, I am imagining, to reach Orbison the man and to help us as viewers to see this man they admire so much. "Orbison's performance... evokes a fearful paralysis that starkly contrasts with traditional masculine strutting and is thus closely linked to the songs he wrote.... The very title, 'Running Scared' emphasizes] the uncharacteristic way in which his music acknowledges male fear and intense emotion" (p. 204). It is significant that such a strong homosocial bond can be sung in a Voice disconnected from body. The penis/phallus connection can be elided momentarily. But the disconnection is at the core: The message can be sung "above" the body but not spoken and not "bodied."

All we see of the stoical man behind the dark shades is an occasional enigmatic smile. To hear his outpouring of pain and anguish in the "face" of this invisibility is an eery experience indeed. For me what is most captivating about the concert is the contrast between the outpouring of soul contained in the lyrics and the voice, with the eery containedness not only of Orbison himself but of his famous backup musicians (even including Springsteen much of the time) and the audience at the Coconut Grove. It may represent a reverence for this icon of pop music. It could also be a deep realization of the import of what he is saying, a realization of his physical frailty and imminent mortality. Could it also be fear? Yes, I find the fear palpable though quite unspeakable.

I agree with Lehman when he says that Orbison often expresses quite a conventional view about women, male relation and sexuality. For me the power of his anguished protest about hegemonic heterosexual manhood-- and I find it heart wrenching in a way I could not have in its earlier 1960's incarnation-- is inscribed somehow in Orbison's body. *He protests against hegemonic manhood with all his being, but he is as trapped within it as any man.* We can feel an exquisite pain as the Father is alternately trashed by Orbison and rehabilitated (just in time) by Springsteen and Co: "Several critics used the cliché that when listening to Orbison's songs of loneliness and lost love, 'it never felt so good to hurt so bad'" (p. 207). His body carries the struggle that the voice expresses, and he must surely know that all too clearly: "The Voice was all that was left, freed from the body" (p. 201). The music strains against the barricades of manhood, looking for openings, falling back again and again for sustenance and reinforcements.

What's Your Brand

Beer and its consumptive patterns and conditions are perhaps quintessential signs of the "really" masculine. I am often amused, and yet disconcerted, by the common tendency of younger men to wear their beer brand on their sleeves, as it were. Strate (1992) calls his article *Beer Commercials: a Manual of Masculinity*. Nowhere, he says, is so much information on the "man's man" presented in a 30-second spot. We will not be surprised by the information. No one will, for the power of the commercials is their very portrayal and glorification of what every man's man must already know. Beer commercials address several key questions:

- *What kinds of things do men do?*.... In the world of beer commercials, men work hard and play hard.... Beer serves as the marker of the end of the work day, the signal of quitting time.... The central theme of masculine leisure time in beer commercials, then, is challenge, risk, and mastery-- mastery over nature, over technology, over others in good-natured 'combat, and over oneself. (pp. 80-83)

- *What kinds of settings do men prefer?*..... The settings most closely associated with masculinity are the outdoors... and the self-contained world of the bar.... The height of

> masculinity can be attained when the natural environment and the work environment coincide, that is, when men have to overcome nature in order to survive. (pp. 82-83)
>
> - *How do boys become men?* Boys become men by earning acceptance from those who are already full-fledged members of the community of men. Adult men are identified by their age, their size, their celebrity, and their positions of authority in the work world and/or status in the bar. (p. 85)
>
> - *How do men relate to each other?....* The dominant context for male interaction is the group, and teamwork and group loyalty rank high in the list of masculine values.... The emotional tenor of relationships among men in beer commercials is characterized by self-restraint. (p. 87)
>
> - *How do men relate to women*?.... According to the myth of masculinity, the man who loses control of his emotions in a relationship is a man who loses his independence, and ultimately, his masculinity; dividing attention [between beer and women] is one way to demonstrate self-control. (p. 89)

I am reminded yet again of Sedgwick: "For a man to be man's man...." Strate restricts his study to beer commercials, so we see men on their best behavior--or at least on behavior tolerable to the beer companies, the networks, regulatory bodies, and viewers. Alcohol's psychophysiological effects break down controls and allow the "invisible, carefully blurred, always-already-crossed line" to be more explicitly crossed, even acknowledged. If women are signs or currency to be passed from man to man to obscure his interest in men, and to shore up his heterosexual identity, perhaps beer performs a similar service.

A Real Man's Music

> 1828... *Heavy metal*, in military affairs, signifies large guns, carrying balls of a large size, or it is applied to the balls themselves.... A person or persons of great ability or power, mental or bodily.... One who is to be another's opponent in any contest. (OED, cited in Walser, 1993, p. 1)

Robert Walser creates an evocative account of heavy metal as a genre and a set of discursive practices deeply implicated in the creation of manhoods and power; a genre that has perhaps been underrated and even demonized. As one who loves a variety of music but has never paid much heed to heavy metal except to note the periodic public outrages about its loudness and excesses, I find Walser's nuanced and appreciative analysis of the contributions of timbre, lyric, melody, and musicianship (usually on the electric guitar) to the serious metal project quite inspiring. The title of his article, *Running With the Devil*, refers to Van Halen's song of the same name:

> Freedom is presented as a lack of social ties, no responsibility, no delayed gratification.... The fantasy is one of escape from all social conventions; it is based on a quite bourgeois concept of the individual, who supposedly has some sort of essence that can be freed from social constrictions. In fact, though, the boundaries that are felt to contain are also the structure within which these very fantasies are produced.

Walser's point here has become a recurring one in my essay; that is, that hegemony at once *needs* its Others and yet finds ever more creative ways to try to contain their threat. That is not, however, to suggest a futility in the subversive masculinity project. Metal appeals, on Walser's account, to young men "lacking in social, political, and economic power but besieged by cultural messages promoting such forms of power, *insisting on them as vital attributes of an obligatory masculinity*" (p. 109). It is a double bind for such young men, maintained by the usual critical factor in double binds; that is, the rule of silence that prohibits one from speaking the bind and thus escaping its strictures. Men can tell their sense of victimhood "slant" by blaming women all too well, but they cannot admit to powerlessness. Working out questions of power and control is apt to be a particularly pressing project for this cohort.

"Heavy metal is, as much as anything, an arena of gender, where spectacular gladiators compete to register and affect ideas of masculinity, sexuality, and gender relations" (p. 111). Fiske compares the male fantasy in metal with that in *The A-Team*: "Feminine intimacy centers on the relationship itself and produces a dependence on the other that threatens masculine independence. Male bonding.... allows an interpersonal dependency that is goal-centered, not relationship centered" (p. 115). Metal often deals with the woman problem, Walser says, by *exscription of the feminine:* "the total denial of gender anxieties through the articulation of fantastic worlds without women--supported by male, sometimes homoerotic bonding" (p. 110). Sedgwick shows us, if we did not already know, that women are apt always to be a threat, but also a critically important absent presence in any such gender spectacle. Walser says "The greater the seductiveness of the female image, the greater its threat to masculine control... *[But] the presence of women as sex objects stabilizes the potentially troubling homoeroticism suggested by the male display*" (p. 116).

We should not, of course, be surprised about the deeply ambivalent view of woman. We might be more surprised by the fact that women constitute half of metal's audience. How are women persuaded to join the spectacle? Walser suggests several possibilities: invitations to participate in the power of the "woman as dangerous Other" mythology, the "sincere romanticism" of bands like *Bon Jovi*, androgyny and appropriation of the "feminine," and (perhaps most compelling) the "free space" for identity formation within a usually male power that is opened up by music as a medium that is "intangible and difficult to police" (p. 132). "For all of its male rhetoric of supremacy... metal's rebellion and fantastic play offer its fans, both male and female, opportunities to make common cause against certain kinds of oppression, even as the same text may enable each gender to resolve particular anxieties in very different ways" (p. 133). Androgyny and cross-dressing offer particularly powerful opportunities for "play" with the conventional/hegemonic boundaries of gender.

Walser concludes his discussion of gender in metal on a provocative and pessimistic note:

> Masculinity is forged... through the negotiations of men and women with the contradictory positions available to them.... It is also forged because masculinity is passed like a bad check, as a promise that is never kept. Masculinity will always be forged because it is a social construction, not a set of abstract qualities but something defined through the actions and power relations of men and women--*because, with or without makeup, there are no 'real men'. (p. 136)*

Synopsis

I close this chapter on Walser's pessimistic point: For all of Man's efforts (I document many of them throughout his-story), is he any closer to defining the stable essence of manhood that he so craves? Is the essentialist project on the ropes--or is manhood coming to terms with the Lack? Or, to put it in a more hopeful way, are we on the threshold of a time that will defined *people* not by gender identity but by diverse and ever-changing performances of identities that they find satisfying and meaningful? We come back, once again, to the question of *intimacy:* Are persons any more likely to find intimacy within/between such identities? How is intimacy to be constructed in such problematic times?

Chapter Eight

DISCOURSES OF INTIMACY

Back to Beginnings

> A series of disputes... runs through modern culture, between what appear to be the demands of reason and disengaged freedom, and equality and universality, on the one hand; and the demands of nature, or fulfilment, or expressive integrity, or intimacy, or particularity, on the other. (Taylor, 1989, p. 101)

CharlesTaylor, the modernist philosopher, expresses here with remarkable clarity the gendering and dialectical nature of human relation in our time. He would object to my appropriation, for he does not name gender; choosing to write as generic Man and declining to name the particularities of Woman's or Man's places. But my purpose here is not to offer what could only be a humble and reductionistic critique of such a far-ranging inquiry by an eminent philosopher; nor is it to follow Taylor's entire archaeology of the Self. Rather, I consult his essay selectively for his help in distilling the particular contributions of Renaissance man's thought to Modern man's constitution of self and relation to the world.

Taylor traces the Modern Self to a bifurcation of Augustine's *inwardness*, which he calls *radical reflexivity.* Such reflexivity becomes a distinguishing feature or pre-condition for the Self, and thus of its expressions in the essay genre:

> The world as I know it is there for me, is experienced by me, or thought about by me, or has meaning for me. Knowledge, awareness is always that of an agent.... We can turn and make this our object of attention, become aware of our awareness, try to experience our experiencing, focus on the way the world is for us. *This is what I call taking the stance of radical reflexivity or adopting the first-person standpoint.* (p. 130)

Taylor's account of the Cartesian turn is an account of a sovereign self, a self sure of its grounds, a self that defines that which it will take account of and that which it will discount. Renaissance man as agent can now "build" ideas and a self independent of his world:

> Descartes declares himself 'certain that I can have no knowledge of what is outside me except by means of the ideas I have within me'.... A representation of reality now has to be

> constructed. As the notion of 'idea' migrates from its ontic sense to apply henceforth to intra-psychic contents, to things 'in the mind,' *so the order of ideas ceases to be something we find and becomes something we build.* (p. 144)

If man can harness his prized rationality to build the ideas that define his very sense of his being, not to mention his definition of places for Other, he can/must also harness his desires: "The Cartesian soul frees itself not by turning away but by objectifying embodied experience.... For Descartes, the hegemony means what it naturally tends to mean to us today, that reason controls, in the sense that *it instrumentalizes the desires"* (pp. 146-147). He need depend on no one, nor bow to any doubt. If God is not exactly dead, *He* is surely displaced. If man follows the right method, he will be rewarded with Truth. Everything else is Other. "For Descartes the whole point of the reflexive turn is to achieve a quite self-sufficient certainty. What I get in the cogito, and in each successive step in the chain of clear and distinct perceptions, is just this kind of *certainty, which I can generate for myself by following the right method*" (pp. 156-157). It is difficult indeed to see a clearing that might admit intimacy to such a Self, a body denied its say.

Montaigne starts down a similar path. But he is diverted when he least expects it. I find Montaigne's surprise discovery of the unruly body a very powerful one:

> The assumption behind modern self-exploration is that we don't already know who we are.... There is some evidence that when [Montaigne] embarked on his reflections, he shared the traditional view that these should serve to recover contact with the permanent, stable, unchanging core of being in each of us.... But things didn't work out this way for Montaigne. There is some evidence that *when he sat down to write and turned to himself, he experienced a terrifying inner instability*: 'My spirit... playing the skittish and loose-broken jade... begets in me so many extravagant Chimeraes, and fantasticall monsters, so orderlesse, and without any reason, one hudling upon an other.... I have begun to keep a register of them.' (citing Montaigne, 1978, I(viii), in Taylor, p. 178)

What Modern man could not identify, albeit in a private moment, with some bit of this "terrifying inner instability" that is the world of body and feelings? Has Modern man dared to keep a "register" and express it as Montaigne sets out to do? The question of body--its place, its denial, its objectification, and its status as Other--must be accounted for. It is denied its place only at great cost and with profound mental gymnastics. Montaigne discovers this as he turns his gaze ever more inward. He is constantly reminded of body by his lifetime struggle with the family kidney stone ailment, but of course the matter goes much deeper than that. He busies himself with the inward gaze (it will appear to some as a solipsistic one): " The world always looks straight ahead; as for me *I turn my gaze inward*, I fix it there and keep it busy.... Others always go elsewhere, if they stop to think about it; they always go forward.... *As for me, I roll about in myself.* (citing Montaigne, 1958, II:17, p. 499)

His is a radical appreciation for his time. He is aware of the beginnings of the notion of separation of body and soul that Descartes will give such prominence:

> We must order the soul not to draw aside and entertain itself apart, not to scorn and abandon the body (nor can it do so except by some counterfeit monkey trick), but to rally the body, embrace it, cherish it, assist it, control it, advise it, set it right and bring it back when it goes astray; *in short to marry it and be a husband to it*, so that their actions may appear not different and contrary, but harmonious and uniform. (citing Montaigne,1958, II:17, pp. 484-485)

Rembrandt's project of Selfhood is less explicit in its absence of words, but it may be even more compelling for that very fact. I find the absence of words compelling in a visceral and "intimate" way. I want to take his part as he ages in his self-portraits; I ache when he loses his wife, when he loses everything to the bankruptcy auction, when he seems to ponder what life is about. But of course I am pondering my own self, my own life. I, like Everyman, come to a crossroads, a critical moment. Will the self be a vertical one defined by the search for universals, or a horizontal one defined by embodied particularities?

Descartes wins the first skirmish on behalf of verticality; representing a critical turn toward hegemony, a critical turn away from body, and a critical turn away from intimate connection. It is tempting to link Montaigne's apparent horizontality to Woman, to the feminine, and to intimacy; though in suggesting that he writes the feminine, I must emphasize that he is also every bit a *man* of his time and social station. Where might we locate spaces for intimacy in his view of the self? Do we name Montaigne's "rolling about in himself," his suggestion that the soul "marry" and "be a husband" to the body, and his absorption in his friendship with La Boétie, *narcissism*? Rider (1972) would say not "Montaigne's greatest achievement is to have caught in his mirror the inner oscillation between object and subject, between being and process, between identity and freedom. The distance between Montaigne and his book is used to reflect the distance between the invisible ego and its Self. *His truth is the mediacy of selfhood*" (p. 102). Rembrandt's truth, too, is about such "mediacy."

The Intentional Self

If intimacy begins with a "deeper engagement in our particularity," it must also be about a consciousness of Other and an orientedness of one's Self toward that Other. Intimacy, then, is an intentional relation of Self and Other. But the consciousness of intentionality cannot be reflexive in the moment of experiencing it. Wilner (1982) says, on a psychoanalytic view, "The knower may never be able to know [themselves] as knower in the act of self-knowing. In that subject and object are distinct within the structure of knowing, *it may be possible to know only the 'me' who can be known and not the 'I' who knows*" (p. 27). Denes (1982) frames it thus:

> Intimacy as I conceive it is both an internal attitude and an interpersonal action. It is a *transitive* condition, linguistically rooted, that awaits for its realization an Other. It is a particular type of communicative connection that happens *between* persons.... Intimacy is an intentional action between like creatures whose will it is to bridge the echoless silence of the universe. (Denes, 1982, p. 136)

Man, Denes claims, struggles with the "mediacy" of selfhood and the perils of self-consciousness (I must acknowledge a misappropriation of Denes' language--she, like Taylor, writes of generic man, but she too could as well be writing of man *qua* man). Intentionality is problematic in the sense that we must "let go" of consciousness in a certain sense to let intimacy happen:

> Conscious single selfhood is a perplexing, ambivalent, conflicted state for [man].... Man... both abhors and has the need to affirm his conscious selfhood and thereby to preserve his centered being. This affirmation of the self is what Tillich has termed 'the courage to be'.... It seems that, suspended between infinity and nothingness, *Man, to become and to maintain Himself, must affirm that which he fears, and to some extent must let go of that which he affirms*. (p. 130)

On Sartre's account, intimacy would always encompass or be encompassed by the gaze, the yearning for symbiosis with Other as completion of Self; "enslavement," he calls it. We are all alone. Each of us struggles with that fact all of our lives, trying nonetheless to "bridge" the silence and find the Self in Other:

> [Relatedness] is not a matter of solicitude, but a context of struggle... a battlefield where freedom is beleaguered by symbiotic yearnings. The 'Other' is a constant necessity and an ever-present menace. The Other is need and revulsion; nausea and hunger. *The Other is the Self, mirrored, reverberating, and magnified....* [And] always vice versa. Hence the problematic character of the human gaze.... 'While I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me.' (citing Sartre, pp. 131-132)

Sartre alludes to a primal symbiosis with Mother; a symbiosis we can never recover and though we grieve for its loss for the rest of our lives. Denes turns to Buber for a less "melancholy" account of self in relation than Sartre's. On Buber's account, the Self and Other would not enslave, but commune:

> 'To be "I" and to speak "I" are one...' [Buber] posits two communicative modes in relation to the world: the 'I-Thou' and the 'I-It'.... The primary word 'I-It describes the world of experience; 'I-Thou' establishes the world of relation.... In dialogic relations there are no separate selves, but only a jointly produced *process* that is given form by the intentionality of each participant, and is realized between them in some communicational mode.... It means, for each, to speak 'I-Thou.' (citing Buber, pp. 132-133)

Buber's account is indeed less "melancholy," and it speaks to the union of selves rather than their separation. His project resonates with Gadamer's in that sense, if I might make a rather simplistic comparison of two complex systems of thought. Can we set out in some deliberate fashion to "jointly produce" intimacy, to "find" I-Thou? Buber would say that we cannot. Intimacy is not, contrary to the popular view we hear in self-help genres, only about certain kinds of instrumental behaviors or technologies that are calculated to lead autonomous "selves" closer to each other. For him, the Thou would speak from the depths of our essence, our history, our humanness.

Human beings, McAdams affirms, universally seek Buber's "I-Thou"relation; we have "the desire to share [our] innermost self with another" (p. ix). Agency is always present. In a paradoxical way, we can only experience intimacy if we can *allow* ourselves always to know the depths and pain of loneliness. Indeed, he says, intimacy and loneliness develop in tandem: "*We do not feel loneliness until we know, at some level, intimacy. And we cannot be intimate until we are capable of being lonely*" (p. 9). In loneliness, we feel something is missing; we are not complete. It is tempting, when we are in the throes of loneliness, to try to grasp Other in order to gain a sense of our own completeness, or to try to keep Other forever in a particular secure place in relation to us.

But we can never be complete; and no relation, however intimate, can fill us for all time. Loneliness is always on the horizon, however denied its voice.

Intimacy as Dialectic

Wilner (1982) defines intimacy between people as *"the experience of another's wholeness,* whether the other is physically present or not; the essential characteristic of the intimate relationship would be the enduring ability of two people to undergo such experiences with one another.... *Intimacy [can be] conceived to be the experience of undergoing new experience"* (pp. 22-23). If intimacy carries a sense of getting beneath the surface, of getting to the whole or "real" selves, it also goes beyond any notion of some intrinsic and unchanging character or quality of those selves in their innerness. Intimacy is lived and experienced, living and experiencing; therefore to the extent that human beings are growing and changing beings, intimacy could never be a static entity. This being so, could intimacy ever be really so much the unfolding and knowing of some pre-existing and enduring qualities of Self and Other, as it is a process of creating some new "in-between"? Intimacy always calls for movement, re-creation, co-creation.

Wilner describes intimacy's moves in terms of dialectical moments:

- The first... is the relationship between the subject and object poles [two relational centers] of the self as they pertain to both individuals.... *In intimacy, this means to go beyond the objective representation of the datum, and to actually experience the other as a living subjective presence, a relating entity in the process of relating.* Our ability to experience the other in this way is dependent upon our loosening these same sources of subjectivity within ourselves. (p. 29)

- [The second is] the relationship between human freedom and the stabile nature of humanity.... *Potential intimates, once again, must be willing to give up their clear boundaries, and to risk losing themselves*; Sartre has shown that this may enable each to find himself with the other. (p. 29)

- A further dialectic of intimacy concerns the tension generated by the experience of separateness and union between the two people.... The establishment of a human's nature

> may depend ultimately on a reality outside of himself, *which he may or may not recognize as also being of himself.* (pp. 31-32)

- > The natural changes, the inner contradictions, and the infinitude and incompleteness through which the self extends itself, all disrupt wholeness, providing an impetus to re-experience it once again.... The experience of wholeness cannot itself last for more than an instant before it reflexively evokes no wholeness.... [But] *people do not face the experience of contradiction automatically.* (pp. 33-34)

Wilner's latter moment hints at dialectics of being and nothingness, a sense of spiritual meaning and essence set against a sense of nihilism. Can Man live optimistically with(in) the ever more contingent nature of contemporary life, the imperative to find new praxis at each new turn? Certainty and infinitude represent an overarching dialectic in men's cultural story, very much related to that of the instrumental and expressive. In the sense that intimacy begins with one's "inmost" self and qualities--with a knowing and stable selfhood, however illusory--it might be said to have some base of certainty. But since intimacy is relational and co-creational, we are still faced with a challenge to the very possibility of certainty. Relational life is always contingent, no matter how much energy--even force-- might be exerted in trying to make it otherwise. If to be intimate is to struggle with difference, it is also to struggle with contradiction and change.

Mayeroff (1971) writes of another view of certainty as a condition of caring for others. He says it is not an epistemological certainty at all, but rather a sense of stability that comes from having purpose and clarity about life, a sense of caring and being cared for, feeling whole in oneself. "Basic certainty," he says, "is more like being rooted on the world than like clinging to a rock" (p. 84). Or, I might add, feeling like you have to *be* the rock. If intimacy moves, it also renews itself. If we can allow it to do so.

Manhood *is* a dialectic, as Smith (1992) shows so clearly in my earlier account of his work. Can Man move *through* the dialectic of the masculine and the feminine, away from his brittle self-definition as the "not" feminine? Can Man move through the dialectic of the instrumental and the expressive? I would no longer want to claim quite so vehemently that the instrumental has no place in formulations of intimacy or that there are never expressive dimensions to instrumentality. It is the construction of meanings around the "doing," the relational context of it and its emotional connotations, that will determine its intimacy valence.

Intimacy Frozen

Does one have to love oneself to be capable of intimacy? It is no accident, Nelson (1988) says, that men so often seem to establish contact with other men first by establishing the safe "turf" of work and expertise, income, possessions. But such things are not, he would suggest, a reflection of the sort of *self-love* that is a pre-requisite of intimacy. Is self-love the same as narcissism? He says not:

> Self-love... has been confused with selfishness, narcissism, and egocentricity. In fact, authentic self-love is quite the opposite. The need to grasp, to possess, and to draw the center of attention to the self is the need of the insecure, those unsure of their own self-worth. It is the need of those who perceive love as a closed energy system, existing in only a limited amount, which must then be hoarded. (p. 5)

Can one then, on this account, be intimate with(in) one's Self? Denes suggests not:

> To speak of intimacy with one's Self... is to confuse the notions of contact and encounter.... I cannot be an intimate companion to myself other than through fissure; other than through a pretense that I am two. The tragedy of the human condition consists precisely in this. *The integrated Self anchored in reality is alone. The integrated Self without an intimate Other is lonely.* (p. 136)

The Self must have a plentitude that can admit Other without totalizing, violating, overwhelming or being overwhelmed. And yet, we yearn for an originary Other:

> Intimacy is the quest for relatedness dictated by a great hunger and an unquenchable thirst, always in the context of exact knowledge and detailed vision of the Other. It is a topographical apperception in minute detail. That is why physical congress in the mode of instant 'I' does not work. It falters at the level of intentionality and falls apart with risks not taken. The fundamental human situation is a state of solitariness. It is deafness and arrested language. It is also total yearning for the recovery of an Other. (Denes, 1982, p. 139)

Denes' "yearning" is an existential and, she would say, ontological one. Berman (1989), in a similar vein, suggests that all human beings feel "empty at the core." Brandon (1976) puts the matter in a most powerful and evocative way:

> The *hole of wanting* can never be filled, except temporarily, by the objects of its wanting. As soon as an aspiration or object is gained, I learn quickly to discount its importance and another replaces it.... These cravings are all mirages in the mind's eye. The gap between craving and satisfaction is called suffering.... Real awakening lies in breaking the bonds of craving wide open. This is not to ask what will satisfy me, but *why I am continuously unsatisfied*. [emphases added](p.11)

The common discourse about *need and neediness* would say that we can only be intimate with another if we are "full," a complete and whole person, or that we have a certain capacity for relation. Such capacity, on this account, is rooted in a good enough childhood experience, a satisfactory resolution of developmental stages (Erikson defines this in terms of capacity for "full genital orgasm"), firm early attachment experiences with caring adults. But Brandon strongly suggests that the "hole of wanting" is still always with us, that it is an inescapable part of our being human. We can perhaps only fleetingly tame its urgent call by finding the courage to ask the existential question, "why is this not (ever) enough"?

What, then, of the sort of yearning, the particular and acute sense of emptiness, that is said to come of early deprivation or attachment problems? What of the *grasping* for relation (we have all seen it or experienced it) that in the end pushes Other away? Wilner (1982) invokes Emerson's notion of intimacy as requiring a "light touch... the mere air of doing a thing, the intimate purpose" (p. 24). It cannot be a totalizing or grasping wholeness:

> Its exterior or interior cannot by itself be grasped witho[illegible]roying the experience of wholeness.... *It is the experience of objective subjectivity and subjective objectivity* that, from one view of what these terms mean, gives thought to feeling and feeling to thought. Wholeness allows for the simultaneous presence of diversity and consistency that is necessary for exploring the boundaries between inner and outer truths, the real and the fantastic, and the rational and irrational. (p.24)

On a psychological reading, Brandon's "hole of wanting," the pit of endless needing, describes equally well--though with profoundly different implications--the needing that comes of deprivation. From an experiential point of view, we all know that not every person has a plenitude of "self" or capacity for intimacy. We know, too, that the cultural meanings of intimacy vary widely. But every person needs Other in some sense. Are we well-served, then, by pathologizing certain persons or groups as deficient or "needy"? This question of individual pathology, neediness, or incapacity for intimate relation is an important one that I choose to sidestep so far. I will perhaps leave it as a question that is beyond the scope of my essay, for to attempt to answer it invokes the very psychological paradigm that I seek to dethrone.

But the question remains: what of two people who desperately need each other, agreeing in the depths of their need to a mutual arrangement as in "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine"? Or, "I will do such and so for you if you will look after (nurture) me"? Or even, "If you do not meet my needs I will beat the shit out of you"? Offering solace, comfort and affirmation to one another as equals in times of need is a part of intimacy. Nurturing, when it is the one-way looking after of an adult Other, may often be a particular form of fusion. Can cravings and graspings to be cared for as a child might be represent intimacy? No, I want to say, for the very craving and grasping totalizes and encloses the Other and ossifies the relation. But I judge too harshly, for there are many moments, indeed life stages, where one looks after one's intimate Other *because* they are intimates or have been so at a time where more mutuality was possible.

Public and Private

If intimacy is only possible between reflective selves, are such reflective selves possible without intimacy? Intimacy and the Self are, in an important sense, intertwined--neither is possible without the other/Other. We need the mirror that intimate relation offers to us, for without it we cannot know our-selves. That is not to say that the Other only mirrors to us what we "really" are, or all that we are. Again, intimacy is co-creational. The selves merge and pull apart in dynamic rhythm:

> 'Even if I cannot see you, if I cannot touch you, I feel that you are with me. With me corresponds neither to a relationship of inherence or immanence, nor to a relationship of exteriority. It is of the essence of genuine *coesse*... of genuine intimacy.' Marcel eloquently suggests that in intimacy one apprehends the other as a full person who is experienced as neither being within or outside of oneself.... *What is the relationship between this 'other' place and the dimensions of internal and external?* (Wilner, 1982, p. 21)

In intimacy there is often an implication of getting beyond or going deeper than socially defined roles and conventions--though we are defined in important ways by these things--to reach what is considered more of the "real," authentic, inner or whole self. There is an emphasis on depth and inner-ness, on getting to know another's "deeper self." All of my preceeding discussion would put such unitary, deeper, real self in some question. Even the possibility of authenticity is in question. That is not to say that we have no enduring qualities; rather that the need to ossify or totalize them makes intimacy more problematic. If intimacy is about disclosing aspects of one's inmost self, how much of that self can or need be exposed to our intimate Other--what is the test of intimacy on this view? How do we understand the interface of this intimate dyad (it could be a or family unit) with the rest of the world?

Is it or could it be desirable for each of us to be an "open book" in our dealings with our intimate and non-intimate world? Van Manen and Levering answer the question by referring to Kant's statement, "If all men were good, they could be candid, but as things are they cannot be" (p. 57). "As things are," we construct complex relations and distinctions. We invent *intimacy* in the Modern era as a way of defining the boundaries between people. *Privacy* becomes, in this era, an important boundary concept:

> Every person is private in the sense that each person is distinct from others and thus, separate from others. And so to respect someone's privacy means that we grant a person the space to be alone and undisturbed or to be with those who share the sphere of privacy.... When we practice privacy, we may be refusing access to outsiders while confirming or protecting intimate relations with insiders.... But intimacy does not only define a social sphere of close relationships; intimacy can also refer to a personal sphere. For example, a person who is attending to body hygiene may feel a lack of privacy if others insist on entering the bathroom. (Van Manen & Levering, 1997, pp. 65-66)

The question of what we "expose" in and through intimacy is an important and complex one. Inness (1992) explores the relation of intimacy and privacy from the point of view of *information*: what is considered private information, with whom it is shared, what meanings and motives determine its valence and definition as "intimacy." What makes the sharing of private information intimate, she says, is not the act of sharing or any other behavior as such, but the "motive of love, liking, or care" underlying it. To share private information with another in the name of love is surely a prime test of intimacy. There is a sense in which being seen to withold information from an intimate subverts intimacy. Sometimes we justify this in terms of not wanting to "hurt" the other (I must confess that I am often suspicious of such a statement of motives).

Inness' word "information," while doubtless intended to be inclusive, does not convey the depths of what is shared, or held back, in intimate relations or any relations. Do we, then, need a sense of personal privacy even in our most intimate relations? Personal privacy, for all that we may see it either as an avoidance of vulnerability or as a psychological need, can be a positive and exciting thing; for the sense of challenge and opportunity to discover and then to rediscover aspects of Self and Other lies at the core of intimacy. This is an important aspect of intimacy's co-creational quality. In intimacy we feel we know Other, and yet we can never show our whole selves or see the whole self of another even if we think we might want to do so. The struggle to know and be known *is* intimacy. The ultimate mystery about the Other keeps it alive and moving.

Is it, then, the "information" conveyed that has an intimacy valency? Is it, as Inness suggests, our motivations that matter most? Or is it the very process of disclosing and sharing, the moment when we stand in vulnerability before another and dare to reveal another layer of who we are? Privacy, Van Manen and Levering say, "appears to mark the absence or partial absence of certain kinds of human relations . . . . Privacy limits or prevents the influence that something or someone may exert in a relation" (pp. 58-59). But it is the very conception of privacy that allows the beauty of the disclosure.

The poet Muriel Rukeyser writes: "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life/ The world would split open" (in Greene, 1988, p. 57). What would happen if one *man* were able to tell the truth about the feelings and desires that hide within him? Perhaps the world would not split open, but we would hear a mighty rumbling. I focus earlier on the positive aspects of privacy, even its value as intrigue or mystery that keeps us coming back for more. But there is a more political dimension to privacy as well (my misappropriation of Ruykeyser's powerful words does not intend to erase the point about power and the subjugation of women by men. In fact, men's hiding of vulnerability is deeply implicated in the mechanisms of their power over Other).

On this point, Boling (1996) says of the two-edged nature of privacy:

> Respect for privacy undermines equality by obscuring and reinforcing a variety of social inequities owing to gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality.... Not only does respect for privacy obscure power, subordination, and inequality; private life is also home to desires, passions, embodied selves, commitments, and values that shape what we believe and who we are. *Dismantling the public-private distinction is crucial to achieving justice by*

> *allowing these different desires, selves, and so on to emerge and inform peoples' ideas about justice.* (p. 13)

Is the question, then, really one of privacy as experience, or one of ideology (the two cannot of course be separated):

> I take them [Pateman & Okin] to be suggesting that it is not privacy per se that is the problem, but rather 'the *ideological* character of liberal claims about the public and private,' that is, privacy in the sense of *depriving* issues of public, political status or recognition. To put it another way, *distinguishing between private and public is not a problem unless it leads us to treat everything that goes on in private as beyond the reach of public knowledge, critical reflection, or political debate and action.*(Boling, p. 15)

"Domestic" violence is perhaps a most obvious example of privacy gone awry. A person can, still with relative impunity in our time, be violent within a family precisely because the family contains it and defines it as something private, a man's *right* or a parent's right. Incest is often kept a secret even within a part of the family unit. When such violation is exposed to "public knowledge, critical reflection or political debate and action," it must stop. What we call domestic violence is an important example because for all that the violence appears to subvert intimacy, it is so often committed-- and excused-- *in the name of* intimacy, the domestic.

Am I coming to a view that says privacy is something sinister, an instrument of subjugation? No, it is not that simple at all. Boling cites notions of "privacy from" and "privacy for" to make an important point about the utility of social pressures and norms in fostering intimacy:

> Shoeman argues that there is not just one private and one public domain which are sharply opposed but many of each lying along a continuum. All of us move among various spheres of life, and each sphere is governed by its own rules about how to respect others' privacy, what sort of interactions are appropriate, and what constitutes moral behavior. Privacy plays an important role in helping maintain the integrity of different spheres of life.... *One of the things privacy is for, then, is preserving intimacy.* (p. 25)

Notions of public and private are central to modern man's constructions of themselves. I suggest that men would cause a rumbling if they showed their deeper and more private selves. But men traditionally find a clear separation of public and private issues (usually expressed in terms of work and home) congenial to their view of things. It is also congenial to their material interests and sense of power and instrumental efficacy. I do not mean to suggest that such processes are always very visible, or that all men feel a sense of personal power--but that is not the point here. Men pay a price, and their intimates pay a price.

Can we be intimate with a stranger? What of the closeness of strangers sharing a common experience, as in watching a very touching movie? As we leave the theater, we are aware of an unstated pact: if we will pretend not to see the tears of the strangers as we all leave the theater, they will pretend not to see ours. There is a dialectic of distance and communion here perhaps. Our emotions might not be so raw, so poignant, if we had viewed the same movie in privacy at home--we somehow need the dialectic of public and private. Can we be intimate without declaring ourselves in some way? We may feel a strong sense of communion with others, having shared a moving experience. But to declare ourselves, to name the tears and the feelings that are plain enough to see, would be to become more vulnerable than we wish to be or than our culture's rules permit. Could this be a form of intimacy nonetheless? Could this tacit sharing of a powerful experience with strangers even be part of the power of the experience? Even if it were so, we surely cannot name these things intimacy.

In a similar vein, is instant intimacy with strangers possible? Is temporary intimacy real intimacy? I have fond memories of a day with my family on a train from Paris to Copenhagen. I have just celebrated my fortieth birthday in Paris. We share a compartment with a man from Australia who is on his annual trip to interesting places in the world. We drink the birthday wine and talk non-stop all day, of everything under the sun, as the train rumbles on. I will never remember his name, nor he ours. We have probably all had such experiences-- is there a fleeting, temporary intimacy that happens *because* we expect never to meet again? It is perhaps akin to the strangers passing through the experience of the sad movie together-- if there is a sense of intimacy it is because of our distance rather than in spite of it. This is a most pleasant and meaningful experience. Surely it cannot be called intimacy, and yet, the fact that the day still means so much to me counts for something.

The apparent intimacy between the guests, host and viewers of the Oprah Winfrey show may be quite another matter. Are we to believe that watching and cheering at the moving parade of human misery brings us closer in some real and useful way? Can we be intimate without facing the Other, without ever meeting? Proponents of electronic communications media claim that they create *a* global village. What is happening to the real-life *villages*, the diversity of life in villages? What is happening to the sacredness of privacy in relation, be it joyful or painful? For all that, Oprah Winfrey may serve a very useful and important role in our society. Her show is often about subverted intimacy.

Epigenesis of Intimacy

Identity and the life cycle.

Erik Erikson writes in 1950 of the epigenetic principle. It is a classic statement of an acultural essentialism:

> Whenever we try to understand growth, it is well to remember the epigenetic principle which is derived from the growth of organisms in utero.... Anything that grows has a ground plan, and... out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole.... While...interaction varies from culture to culture, it must remain within the proper rate and the proper sequence which govern the growth of a personality as well as that of an organism. (p. 52)

Erikson acknowledges cultural variations, but insists that there is a "proper" developmental unfolding. As the title of his monograph *Identity and the Life Cycle* implies, his project is to extend Freud's work into a comprehensive view of human development across the whole life cycle. For him, the possibility of adult intimacy is dependent upon a particular sense of self identity. On this view, identity is directly linked to the satisfactory meeting of life-stage needs, resolution of the Oedipal situation, "firm self-delineation" and, interestingly, to sexual identity as evidenced by the capacity for "mutual genital orgasm." The alternative is *fusion* of Self and Other or "identity loss" (pp. 124-125).

Erikson goes on to say that many of the mothers he sees in his psychoanalytic practice have a "pronounced status awareness... a special quality of penetrating omnipresence.... These mothers love, but they love fearfully, plaintively, intrusively" (p. 136). If, on the Freudian account, girls are the ones who "lack," their deficiencies may become the more sinister when they become women/mothers. Erikson's 1950's phallocentric account is remarkable, not only for its pathologizing of mothers, but for its silence on fathers: "Fathers... surrender to the wife's intrusiveness or [try] guiltily to elude her" (p. 137). That is virtually *all* he has to say about fathers. Erikson is clearly an innovator--his chart of the stages of *ego* development is a most elegant one, and it represents an important and creative extension of Freud's work even today. He is still very much embedded in early twentieth-century notions of "normality" (read heterosexuality and clear and normatively-defined separation of sex roles).

But if Erikson successfully lets the "differentiated" man off the hook and holds mothers ultimately responsible for issues of intimacy, we might ask whether it has not been a rather pyrrhic victory for fathers and for their sons and daughters. We must ask, I think, what are the effects of such an authoritative account--so clearly privileging men's tradition of *separation*--on men and men in relation. What price do men pay for the story of separation and independence that has for so long been enshrined in the developmental canon? Such schemas may have something to say, still, about how *men* think about relationship; but that being so, it is perhaps more so in their sub-textual story of how men construct the world--their story of verticality, competition, and distance/differentiation--than in their overt claims.

I cite earlier Chodorow's (1989) well-known challenge to the Freud-Erikson story of identity formation; her rehabilitation of girls and women from their "deficient" position in the Oedipus story to a position of strength in intimate relation. In the process, she decenters the privileged position of boys and men. To briefly recap her point, the new story goes like this:

> For little girls, then, the world is always one of relation. For little boys, however, gender identity is more problematic. Because there are fewer salient men within his everyday world, the boy must figure out how to be a man on his own and *in opposition*.... The little boy identifies with a disembodied `position' in the world--he renders a guess about what the position of men might be, and then he patterns himself after the guess. (p.185)

Chodorow (1989), in extending her analysis of gender formation, says that girls/women "are," and are in a relatively stable way, while boys/men "do," and must keep doing for all of their lives. That is, "*maleness must be re-earned every day*" (p.33). Having to prove oneself anew every day prepares men for their instrumental place in the capitalist production system, even as that system rapidly changes from a production to an information and service-based one. Men must surely feel confused and apprehensive about their place in the world today.

Gilligan (1982) is best known for her challenge to Kohlberg's (1984) work on moral development in children. She particularly challenges his claim of a universal hierarchy of moral development based on a study of the behavior of thirty boys. Her studies of girls suggests that girls and boys are socialized to deal with moral issues in markedly different ways. Drawing on Chodorow's work, she shows that men learn to be concerned about "justice" and the ordering of relationships and responsibilities in logical and vertical-hierarchical ways, while women tend to be concerned with care for and connection with others, a more horizontal orientation. She captures in a powerful metaphorical way the difference in male and female relatedness:

> The images of hierarchy and web, drawn from the texts of men's and women's fantasies and thoughts, convey different ways of structuring relationships and are associated with different views of morality and the self.... As the top of the hierarchy becomes the edge of the web and as the center of a network of connection becomes the middle of a hierarchical progression, *each image marks as dangerous the place which the other marks as safe.* Thus the images of hierarchy and web inform different modes of assertion and response: the wish to be alone at the top and the consequent fear that others will get too close; the wish to be at the center of connection and the consequent fear of being too far out on the edge. (p. 62)

One of the more problematic aspects of epigenetic views of gender and intimacy--Chodorow's and Gilligan's formulations as much as Erikson's and Kohlberg's--is their embeddedness in particular views of the family and essential sex roles. Implicitly if not always explicitly, these formulations accept a view of the nuclear family, still quite traditionally defined and delimited, as primary site of intimacy and its genesis. Mothers are, it seems, still more responsible for socializing children. What is happening to our ideas about men's responsibilities, and men's privileges? Is the father participating equally in parenting activities, is he still let off the hook, or is he being marginalized?

Mars and Venus.

John Gray (1992) chooses not to question the genesis of structures and gender differences in intimacy, but rather to cut right to the "how" of improving male-female communication. He must be doing something right, for he has sold over a million books, attracted many thousands of people to his relationship seminars, and appeared on the major talk shows. What is his message? The title of his book, *MEN ARE FROM MARS, Women Are from Venus,* immediately alerts us to his "take" on gender. His format parallels that of Warren Farrell, though his tone is much more mellow and his argument less inflammatory. Like Farrell, he is enamored of authoritative statements, lists, and bold-face emphases of his major points. He is an effective essayist. A brief sampling of his points may be useful:

- A man's sense of self is defined through his ability to achieve results.... To offer a man unsolicited advice is to presume that he doesn't know what to do or that he can't do it on his own.

- A woman's sense of self is defined through her feelings and the quality of her relationships.

- Many times a woman just wants to share her feelings about her day, and her husband, thinking he is helping, interrupts her by offering a steady flow of solutions to her problems.

- When our partner resists us, it is probably because we have made a mistake in our timing or approach.

- To feel better Martians go to their caves to solve problems alone..... To feel better Venusians get together and openly talk about their problems.

- Men are motivated and empowered *when they feel needed*.... Women are motivated and empowered *when they feel cherished*.

- When she wakes up and remembers her needs, he also wakes up and wants to give her more .... A man's deepest fear is that he is not good enough or that he is incompetent.

- To fully express their feelings, women assume poetic licence to use various superlatives, metaphors, and generalizations.... The biggest challenge for women is correctly to interpret and support a man when he *isn't* talking.... Never go into a man's cave or you will be burned by the dragon! [At this point, Gray advocates that Venusians take a break and go shopping, for of course all Venusians love shopping]

- It is very difficult for a man to differentiate between empathy and sympathy. He hates to be pitied.

- When a man loves a woman, periodically he needs to pull away before he can get closer..... A man automatically alternates between needing intimacy and autonomy.

Gray's pithy statements are like the visible and strikingly bright and clear visible tenth of the iceberg. I find them to be insightful capsule assertions on what might be called the "gender war" between men and women in our culture. At first glance they seem to reflect a view of men and women as different but equal, and a view thoroughly grounded in a knowledge of the psychological development of each gender. Why, then, do I damn him with such faint praise? What do I imagine to be contained in the unstated dark 90%? His technology of relationship, like all technologies, promises to get the job done. Like all technologies, it tends to dazzle its user with the certain essential truths of technique and results rather than dark questions about the "why" of things or questions about their politics (If the book itself does not dazzle, a toll-free number is available to order video and CD ROM versions). I must at this point confess to my reader about my own "dark 90%": I only feel compelled to buy Gray's book after hearing on the Oprah Winfrey show that his now ex-wife is out in the marketplace selling her own version of the relationship technology.

Like Warren Farrell, Gray conveniently elides questions of power and the uses and abuses of power in relationships. Male-female relation is still not, in our time, a "level playing field." The silence of the Martian in his cave is not simply the obverse of the well of the Venusian; it is also a silencing. In the end, I read Gray as implicitly advocating that women work harder to understand men and accept them as they are. He does not challenge in a meaningful way the traditions that bring men and women to where they are today; traditions that carry strong implications of power. This is not to say that women do not construct or deploy power--rather that it is still so much dependent on a patriarchal framework for that construction and deployment.

Intimacy as Love

> Sando Ferenczi, the Hungarian psychoanalyst, wrote that our real aim in life is to be loved, and that any other observable activity is really a detour, an indirect path toward that goal. All of this follows from the emptiness at the core. (Berman, 1989, p.21)

> There is nothing about the behavior constituting intimate acts and activities that identifies them as intimate. Instead, intimate decisions are identified by their motivation-dependent content. When an agent characterizes an act or activity as intimate, she is claiming that it draws its meaning and value from her love, liking, or care. (Inness, 1992, pp. 74-75)

Sexton and Sexton (1982) say that love is a "qualifying emotion" for intimacy. What particular place does love have in intimacy--surely it is more than a qualifying emotion? We first have to try to decode the word *love* that has come to mean so many things and that is thrown around so indiscriminately. So much nonsense is propagated around this word "love," particularly in its romantic variations. To the cynical or to the capitalist, "love" has become a commodity, a technology, and a marketing opportunity. If the cynic has a point here, it is perhaps to suggest that such appropriation of "love" subverts the possibility of the "real thing." But how might we know the real thing if we were to encounter it?

McAdams (1989), writing from a psychological paradigm, may be able to help us. There are, he says, four kinds of love; all traceable to the thought of early Greek men: *sorge* (affection), *philia* (friendship), *agape* (charity), and *eros* (romantic love). Particular forms of connection, McAdams says, can be experienced in any of these modes, though our notions of *intimacy* have evolved more recently. To be intimate is to "love" in a deep sense, though the obverse may not be so true--we can feel love for Other without being intimate, without having our feelings recognized or reciprocated by them, without even being within their space or being known by them. Love for another can go unrequited and even undeclared, while intimacy is at its core an expression of mutuality. What, then, are the languages of love's stories? What would it mean to *men* to express to Other the depths of their love, their need for love, the emptiness they must often feel? What would it mean to express these things to themselves?

Sorge.

> As Lewis sees it, the humblest and most widely diffused form of loving is *affection*, or what the ancient Greeks... called *sorge*. This is the form of love that parents show their children and that all of us show to those things and people with whom we are most familiar. This gentle form of loving may be the most natural of loves. (McAdams, 1989, p. 41)

Affection is a love of familiarity, of comfort and security. The expression of affection usually elicits a response, though not necessarily in an identical form or *quid pro quo*. McAdams is quite right in saying that we all need affection in our lives. We need affection as a base if we are to "move" in a way we call intimacy. But affection alone is not enough. The element of challenge is a critically important one here in its sense of a call for "something more." A truly intimate relation demands a flow, a rhythm of change and growth within the individuals and in the nature of their relatedness that continually challenges fusion and comfort and status quo. This is often described as "getting to know the person in a deeper way."

Sorge contains a particular element of *responsibility* for the Other that may either be very one-sided or more or less mutual depending upon the ages and situations of those involved. Affection is often expressed as nurturance; in the case of the parent and infant, a symbiosis that cannot be fully symmetrical. Neither can it be fully agentic: not on the child's part on account of their relative helplessness, nor on the parents' part because their relation and affection for the child also carries a parental imperative. If nurturance carries an imperative or responsibility, the essentialist story assigns more responsibility for it to women, the "natural" nurturers--this story is long been relatively silent on the place of men. I ask again whether nurturance can be intimacy if it is one-sided?

Affection may, as we all know, be expressed in many different ways. It may be physical. We expect it to be verbal or verbally accessible, but perhaps it does not have to be that either. Men are often seen as expressing affection in covert, implicit ways. They would often want to deny that it is affection they are expressing if such would be seen as mere sentiment--can such denied affection be called intimacy or lead to intimacy?

Philia.

McGill's (1985) large-scale empirical study is representative of studies on men and friendship. His study is important as one of the first to signal "trouble" in men's lives:

> To say that men have no intimate friends seems on the surface too harsh, and it raises quick objections from most men. But the data indicate that it is not far from the truth. Even the most intimate of friendships (of which there are very few) rarely approach the depth of disclosure a woman commonly has with many other women... Men do not value friendship. Their relationships with other men are superficial, even shallow. (p.100)

Friendship, what Aristotle calls *philia,* is the relation of equals, a "rational and tranquil form of love whereby two people come together by virtue of a shared truth or common interest" (McAdams, 1989, p. 42). Friendship is based upon some measure of commonality or sameness (or at least perceptions of sameness) and a free choice. As we have seen, friendship for early Greek men is indistinguishable from men's business, men working in men's interests. Rationality and a clear distance--two men walking or working side by side toward a common quality or goal--may still be the guiding story for Modern man's relationships.

I am sitting grading some papers in the food court of a local shopping mall. Two older men come along and sit at a nearby table. They get their coffee and sit, saying little. A third man comes along with his coffee. They josh him about being late, talk about the weather, sit quietly for a few moments. One of them asks the other how his wife is doing. A long discussion ensues about her cancer, her ups and downs, her stubbornness in refusing to follow her doctor's advice. The tone is one of warmth and great concern. I am struck by the fact that there is no explicit expression of empathy to this man who is losing his life-long partner. The three men get up, say something like “see you soon” or “take care,” and go their separate ways. They are obviously good friends. They obviously care. I wonder if we can say they are intimate?

I am very taken with the film, *Il Postino,* the story of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. During his time in exile in Italy, he befriends or rather is befriended by a local peasant men acting as a postman. Their relationship deepens, and Neruda becomes a mentor in matters of writing and romance. He is a powerful model for a particular manhood; a manhood of romanticism, expressed poetically, a manhood of possibilities. Neruda returns to Chile and, it seems, forgets about the younger man. But the younger man does not forget Neruda, to his dying moment. Can we call such mentorship, based on the different ages, education, and social station of the two men, friendship? Does one have to invest as much as the other or care as much as the other for the relation to constitute friendship? What is the obligation of the mentor here, once he has initiated or acceded to the relation?

Agape.

Agape, the third form of love, is a love expressed through charity, obligation or duty. It can be love from a distance, a love delimited, a love located within a religious framework and motive, a love of obligation and salvation: “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Agape is not, or at least need not be, an embodied and visceral love. It can reflect a *selflessly* unconditional giving that expects no reward or mutuality. Lewis (in McAdam, 1989, p. 43) describes it as "a crazy, deviant, socially-inappropriate, revolutionary kind of love," the love of Ghandi and Jesus and Martin Luther King, Jr.. Who could, in such august company as these great men, be critical of a giver's motives in *agape*? Who could be critical, in the same terms, of those who build institutional structures for "giving"--organized charity and help, justice systems, communication technologies, for example--for these humanistic measures are called for by human suffering. But surely giving from such heights is not really friendship; I am inclined to wonder if it brings us, giver and receiver, to intimacy?

Nelson (1988) shows how men, in particular, locate agape within a hierarchy of relations and within a religious tradition. It is also much safer to be the giver, if the giving is from on high, than it is to be the receiver. Helping is more gratifying to the helper than the one helped. It is particularly difficult to receive if we have come to understand receiving (being needy) as representing weakness, vulnerability, and responsibility for our sins. Control rests in the giver, it seems, though as Levinas (1989) shows us, to look into the face of the other is to forever be responsible for them. To look into the face of Other is to move from *agape* to *philia,* to *sorge*--even to *eros*

Mayeroff (1971) says, "To care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualize himself" (p. 1). If the relation is signified as one of inequality of status or station, it seems critical that equality be a possibility or goal. Noddings (1984) says that to live in intimate relation is to live care-fully; to "engross" ourselves in each other's lives. To be so engrossed is to take on something of the other's burden, to worry about them, even to suffer on their behalf. The engrossment is not about concern for the other's interests from afar. Nor is it to boldly "walk in their shoes," as in the traditional (she says male) story of empathy. It is, according to Kierkegaard, to "apprehend another's reality as *possibility*" for our own lives (cited on p. 14). When we are able to so apprehend, we must then act, take responsibility. "*I must*..." she says, "I must act on behalf of the other" (p. 81) To the extent that men's cultural stories are about abstract conceptions of justice and ethics, and about invulnerability, men will have difficulty with such a radically receptive (feminine) engrossment.

We begin to see here that diverse kinds of caring are deeply embedded in cultural stories of human relation. Though I may feel that Noddings underestimates men's capacity for "engrossment," the point is perhaps to wonder about somewhat different questions. Do men have the words for this deeply receptive way of being? Do men simply express their caring in very different ways than do women? I am reminded here of the stories that "slip out" from men's experiences in war. Many experience *unspeakable* horrors, including the deaths of their close buddies. There can be no question of their closeness, their concern for each other in the heat of battle, their grief. To die to save one's friend is about as ultimate a sacrifice as can be imagined. But the words do not exist, after the war, for the depths of fear, vulnerability, loss. "It was very hard," they simply say. There is something missing in the story, something that may not be spoken except in the heat of battle (if even then). Could it be *eros*? We are back to a consideration of the homosocial bond.

Eros.

> One of the difficulties with taking empathy to be a source of friendship is that it continues the tradition of thinking of friendship between men as asexual, the opposite of the carnal, the Ciceronian alternative to the sexual connection. Instead, it might be worth asking whether dialectics of male friendship aren't firmly rooted in an idea of the sexual characteristics of one's male friends, characteristics which, in acknowledging, even admiring, don't require a buried homosexual foundation to be real or authentic. (Neve, 1989, p. 70)

Our culture has long been obsessed with *eros*, the fourth form of love: "the romantic, sexual, passionate love of 'lovers.' It has been called everything from ultimate ecstasy to divine madness. Poets celebrate it as delicious consummation, glorious battle, ultimate transcendence" (McAdams, 1989, p. 43). Eros reflects a dialectical relationship of fusion and separateness; but it is the fusion that captivates, the separation that energizes. Becoming "one" in ecstatic moments of *eros* can be a vital aspect of love. This very fusion, though it may be fun and intensely energizing at times, may actually obscure intimacy: "The desire to be close through sharing one's essence is not the same as the desire to merge with another into undifferentiated unity" (McAdams, 1990, p.47). I perhaps say enough on this point earlier.

Perhaps it is not *eros* that is problematic, but its idealizing and compartmentalizing and, for men, its linking to *performance* and power. Men's cultural story about sexual performance seems to be a central concern and a metaphor for heterosexual relation (perhaps for any relation). The paradox is that the more performance is a focus, the more problematic it may become. Such performance seems the antithesis of intimacy. This matter deserves a deeper exploration. I fear that I am reducing *eros* to its surface manifestations; or worse, that I am trying to take the joy out of it, take away the powerful energy of this word, circumscribe and delimit it. Just as so many men do. I wonder why it is such a daunting word. *Eros* is deeply implicated--though denied--in men's friendships with men. It is the unsayable, the unthinkable. It is a remarkable denial.:

> *Eros is desire*.... We experience eros when we are drawn to another, when we strongly sense the other's attraction, when we find ourselves both filled and filling in communion with the other. It has strong emotions.....Without *eros*, *agape* is cold and devoid of energizing passion. Without *philia*, epithymia becomes a sexual contract. Without *epithymia*, other ways of loving become bloodless. Without *agape*, the other dimensions of loving lose their self-giving, transformative power. [emphasis author's](Nelson, 1988, pp. 54-55)

Giving What We Don't Have

Among the commonplaces of modern psychology we find the assertion that we cannot love (give to) Other or receive from Other if we are not ourselves "full" (if we have not been filled in our primal relation with the mother), if we do not or cannot love ourselves, or if we are unable to maintain a "just right" distance between ourselves and Other. John Gray, in his appearances on the Oprah Winfrey show, uses a plastic tank to show how we fill ourselves up so we can be available for love with Other. Such a view assumes agentic and a sovereign and stable selves, a certain kind of consciousness. It assumes that "love" can be adequately defined and specified, that "it" can be "given" to the Other and reciprocated. It assumes that love stands outside of cultural construction and even language (even as we say "I love you" we know that the words cannot express the fullness of love). What, then, do we make of the radicalness of the ontological Lack that will always frustrate desire and being? I return often to Denes' notion of intimacy as "bridging the echoless silence of the universe." Intimacy, in McAdams' modernistic and dialectical sense of the communion and agency of love, may more or less successfully serve in certain ways to bridge both the ontological hole or gap and the symbolic one that is so fearsome to us. More, or less? Does "love" simply obscure human distance for a time? Many questions.... *love* is not yet exhausted.

Why does "romantic" love in particular so often seem otherworldly, illusory; even too good to be true, *self-centered and self-conscious?* There is something more to be said about modernity's pathologizing of narcissism and need and its elevation of sovereign Selves to deity. Much as I want to detour around psychoanalysis, the Law must have its say. Perhaps Selecl's (1994) Lacanian account, *Love: Providence or Despair,* can thicken the question of modern love:

> *For romantic love to emerge, one does not need the real person present; what is necessary is the existence of the image.* Lacan first defines love in terms of a narcissistic relationship of the subject: what is at work in falling in love is the recognition of the narcissistic image that forms the substance of the ego ideal. When we fall in love, we position the person who is the object of our love in the place of the ideal ego. We love this object because of the perfection which we have striven to reach for our own ego.... Lacan's famous definition of love is that *the subject gives to the other what he or she does not have*. (p. 19)

Romantic love's romanticizing capture of the Other (albeit a mutual capture/enrapture) and apparent indifference to the rest of the world that surrounds their encounter is a tempting vision of plenitude indeed, for the alternative (sublimation) is but a fleeting and fragmentary contact with the Other: "The true sublime love renounces, since it is well aware that we can 'only enjoy a part of the body of the Other.... that is why we are limited in this to a little contact, to touch only the forearm or whatever else-*ouch*!'" (citing Lacan, p. 23). The little "ouch" never seems enough so we must always reach for more. What of Lacan's "Big Other," the social symbolic structure expressed in language: "Love merges out of speech as a demand that is not linked to any need.... [The] object has a paradoxical status: it is what the subject lacks, and... what fills this lack" (p. 22). "This, then, is the supreme paradox of love and the institution: *the true sublime love can only emerge against the background of an external, contractual, symbolic exchange mediated by the institution*" (p. 24).

Roland Barthes' (1978) *A Lover's Discourse* tries to express perhaps more elegantly than any other text *that which cannot be expressed*--by Man at least. The lover's discourse is a male discourse; the Lack it "writes" is not only ontological but feminine, on Barthes' account. Juliet MacCannell (1994) describes the lover's discourse as "by definition or by default, what overshoots the... other discourses... that, together, try to make up for its absence" (p. 25). A metadiscourse? "Loveless sex and sexless love," she says, "are pulsations of discontinuity and continuity crucial to the symbolic order, they are the form of how we suffer that order, the order of the signifier.... In sexed love the object and its double collide.... *Sex is dangerous, precarious, too hot to handle when it is linked to love*" (pp. 41-42). Too hot to handle for men, she seems to say:

> The masculine subject that wants to join *this* new [feminine] subject across the [symbolic] limit must yield, must give up what Lacan calls 'the phallus' to take on woman, this other *jouissance*. Not all men are by any means willing to do so. But for those who do, a certain fresh, new *poesis*, a new art, a new foundation for culture itself, not prescribed along parental lines, is opened. (p. 39)

If sex is too hot to handle when it is linked to love (at least for Man), where might we find a nexus of love and intimacy, sex and intimacy? If men must give up the phallus to take on woman (the alternative is found in the tradition of sex as *performance*), what must he do to "take on" man? Can he, reminiscent of Sedgwick's "line," finally acknowledge that the line is always already crossed? Intimacy cannot be reduced to Gray's tidy technologies. Intimacy cannot deny *eros*. Man must riskfully reach for the "new poesis" if he would be intimate. He must reach, anew, for the feminine; for the mother who is his teacher. That is not to say that man need to or should foresake woman and embrace man as love object. But to deny the "line" with man is also to deny intimacy with woman.

A Chasm in the Text

A friend asks if I see any hope at all for men and intimacy, since the text so often seems at pains to foreclose on the possibility. He then asks, with a sensitive tentativeness, whether I feel passion as I write--the text so often seems to speak with the disembodied Cartesian voice of no one. His questions capsulize a growing awareness that there is something missing, and it spins me into an inchoate sense of crisis. I feel a chasm opening in the text as I review McAdams' workmanlike but all too modern psychological discourse on intimacy; it closes only momentarily when I once again--and reluctantly--invoke psychoanalysis. My cursor stops in protest. It will not move any further without some new direction and new hope. I *feel* the crisis clearly enough. How might I interrogate it?

- If manhood has for so long been a masquerade, maintained by a massive gender gymnastic exercise, how are we to know it? Man finds it difficult to theorize himself as Man (women are much better at it). Man finds it particularly difficult to see Power, particularly in the moment when he feels impotent and without words. Where, in the face of this, does a man of privilege such as I find a space from which both to critique male hegemony and to affirm man's/my goodness? Where do *I* stand as a man?

- How does Man maintain his center in a time when Lack/Other talks back at him, insisting that he acknowledge his own lack? How, and what cost, does Man exclude Other from his being?

- Is anything real "anymore?" Where do we look for a real man, a plain man, amidst the plethora of imposters and "wannabes"? Surely the masked man is out there somewhere waiting to reveal his identity, to be discovered, uncovered, recovered? Or, if we must forego the very possibility of such a man, where does life find a foundation?

- I signal from the very title of this project that it is to be a political one, and I would still argue that a political project is called for. But now I wonder, have I gone too far in my efforts to erase texts that invoke an essence of manhood or of life? How am I authorized to appropriate certain texts and expel others, as if I were Archimedes standing outside of the world?

- Where do we locate men's *intimacy* today, or any day? Is "it" insufficient, absent, subjugated, forbidden, feared and denied--or simply different from that of women? Can we even name any stable or unitary state of intimacy?

- Ocularcentrism is breaking down out there and within me, but it still dominates. I must still stake out the territory in male fashion, often by "pissing" around its terms and arguing in the very binary Cartesian fashion I seek to dislodge. All too often I resist, as any man might, going deep. I find myself thinking manhood and intimacy rather than feeling it; critiquing its limitations rather than affirming its *unknown* and perhaps *unknowable* possibilities.

- Barthes (1978) says, "Having attained the end of language, where it can merely repeat *its last word* like a scratched record, I intoxicate myself on its affirmation" (p. 21). Is the end of language the beginning of love or an admission of its impossibility?

- Barthes also says "I cannot *write myself*.... What writing demands, and what any lover cannot give it without laceration, is to sacrifice *a little* of his Image-repertoire, and to assure thereby, through his language, the assumption of a little reality" [emphasis author's](p. 98). Can I give to my reader a plenitude I do not have, the very thing I say no man gives to his world, by employing a language that always Lacks?

- Where do I turn for legitimation of anything as modernity and postmodernity duke it out? My text is firmly mired in the thought of modernity. The terms that allow and even demand critique do not allow a "new" certainty. The language of what "is" cannot encompass what could be or what is not yet thinkable. My entire crisis is the crisis of postmodernity, of enframing technology, of global hegemony.

- If language reaches its limit, does the essay project also stall? Can the essay deconstruct or jump-start itself?

I tremble at the asking of such questions, and I cannot now answer for all of them. It is scant comfort to realize that the chasm goes beyond my text, for my text is Man's text. It is entirely fitting that the chasm should finally break through on questions of *love* and *emptiness*, that which so symbolizes the end of language. Ferenczi says, "love is all there is," yet we are faced with the "echoless silence of the universe." I am feeling acutely lonely at this moment; acutely aware of my need and all of humankind's need for love set against the enormous problematics in the intimacy enterprise.... As I wander out into the hallways of the college where I work to take a break from such heavy thoughts, there is a huge conference of Aboriginal youth going on. I am overwhelmed by the collage of bright-faced youth, adult mentors and elders, drums and singing, sweetgrass, knowledges, energy. It is a *gathering* of the old and the new; a circle that seems to be working to affirm the truths it knows and yet to make sense of new challenges. It occurs to me that no dominant culture (including the hegemonic patriarchal one of "our" culture) could or would see the need for such reflection on identity. This is not my "world" and I cannot presume to appropriate it, but I am filled with a new hope for the spiral cycle of Life and for the human capacity to move from the old to new places of reflection and consciousness and purpose.

Chapter Nine

REINVENTING INTIMACY IN OUR TIME

Introduction

I conclude the previous chapter with an account of crisis; my crisis, certainly, but also the crisis of other men (and, though in a different sense, women). It would be the postmodern crisis come "home" to roost, if a postmodern crisis could have a home. I sink into discouragement, a grieving, and a nostalgia for what never was but seemed to be so. If it is difficult enough to locate any stable notions of manhood and male intimacy in modernity, I find it acutely discouraging to try to locate "them" in our contemporary time. In this chapter I try to recover some ephemeral or incipient sense of intimate connection between people-- and connection between my-self and the text about intimacy that so often seems to speak in a voice outside of me. Clichés abound in our society's efforts to get a grip on the signifiers *postmodern, technological, and global*. Each is illusory, incomplete, fragmentary. I have lost my sense of boldness-- or have I lost the need for boldness? What is *real* anymore?

Revisiting Authenticity and Reflexivity

It is perhaps worth visiting questions of *authenticity* here as a theme with particular meanings in our time. Authenticity is the holy grail of essentialism and, perhaps, one of the more lucrative offerings in the capitalist store. Johann Fornäs' (1994) project, in *Listen to Your Voice*, is to rehabilitate authenticity and to free it from its essentialist roots through reflexivity. He describes authenticity in the context of contemporary music as "a special relation between style and identity". Identity in this context can be a reflection of temporal continuity and stability, spatiality, the "individual and collective, internal and external, subjective and objective, psychic and social" (p. 156).

Like the essayist, the musician reflects more than their own yearning and their own subjectivity; they have a project that is fulfilled to the extent that they and their listeners are able/willing to share an experience of the production as "authentic." Authenticity in the context of musical genre and content is always a "reflective yearning for something else," (p. 168), a nostalgia, and always a text. Fornäs distinguishes three forms of authenticity: *social,* "based on the norms that are legitimate within a certain (real or imagined) social community of musicians and/or listeners"; *subjective,* referring to the "mind and body" experience of performer and/or listener; *cultural or meta-authenticity* that "moves within (and derives legitimacy from) ... the texts themselves" (p. 168).

Reflexivity is, in a similar context, "a *mirroring* of identities through cultural discourses, meaningful texts, sounds and/or images" (p. 170). Reflexivity, too, points in three different directions: social, subjective, and cultural:

> Sometimes [the] self-mirroring and symbolic self-definition of [modern culture]... is interpreted as an irreversible loss of all authentic subjectivity. If the genuine voice is understood as something originally given, natural and spontaneous, then certainly all efforts to actively reconstruct it or reflect (upon) it can be felt as irreparable degradings. (pp. 170-171)

We must, then, understand the notion of the "genuine voice" in new ways; it must "*reach down to your 'heart'*" (p. 173). I wonder, on this account, if the heart always tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; that is, can we claim some enduring inner extra-cultural truth? No, to accede to that would be to argue against my whole thesis. Does the authentic voice become a solipsistic and merely nostalgic one on behalf of an individual or even a whole group or generation? Fornäs, hopeful for the future, would say not. Authenticity does not have to signify tradition and history (though it will always have debts there). Authenticity that cannot move is, like "intimacy" that cannot move--if not doomed to extinction it is certainly doomed to a frantic and ultimately futile rescue operation. Authenticity that seeks to grasp or totalize is similarly doomed. The reflexive offers openings for co-creation of voices--I want to call it *intimacy*--at many levels.

Meštrović (1997) in his book *Postemotional Society*, paints a rather darker picture of the possibilities for authenticity in our time; a time when "synthetic, quasi-emotions become the basis for widespread manipulation by self, others, and the culture industry as a whole... when emotions are severed from intellect" (p. xi). He goes on to argue that "What seem to be postmodern circulating fictions are not really rootless or chaotic, and... postmodernism implies neither human freedom from traditional constraints nor nihilism. *Rather, postemotional society introduces a new form of bondage, this time to carefully crafted emotions*" (p. xi) .

Paradoxically, it seems that "postemotional types" living in an age of information have access to a great deal of knowledge, including knowledge of the global village, emotions, and the technologies of relation-- but feel helpless to act and desperate for even more data: "They been reduced to acting out the role of Riesman's impotent 'inside dopesters': They want to know almost everything precisely because they have concluded, deep down, that they are really powerless to do anything significant to affect politics or change the course of world events" (p. xii). Data is God, it seems, whether it is in the form of diverse information about a multitude of topics from around the globe-- or an accumulation of digitized information about what movies one rents or what brand of toilet tissue one buys. No one, it seems, wants to seriously question why we are allowing ourselves to be so enframed by information technologies. We have perhaps never before lived with such a monstrous illusion of control and individual freedom--and such a deep sense of impotence and yearning for something "real." Meštrović pulls no punches: "*Postemotional society has reached a phase in its development in which it values insincere sincerity, synthetic candor, feigned frankness, and affected openness*" (p. 57).

Authenticity is perhaps always a problematic; not only in terms of Meštrović's important political point (in reference to television programming) about sincerity in the eyes of one's "audience," but in terms of its roots in the notion of a Self that is knowing and knowable. The modernist, Meštrović says, wants always to rationalize what were once "spontaneous, genuine emotions":

> Most relevant of all to the present discussion is the dawning that a post-*Gesellschaft* society (a post-society society) has emerged in which *the authentic (community) is mass-produced artificially.* The notion of an artificially authentic community seems to be an oxymoron at first glance, but appears to be the meaning of Disneyland culture, the McDonaldization of society, Internet 'communities,' and other anomalies that postmodernists have already uncovered. (p. 74)

In an "outer-directed" society, he says, everything is group-oriented, oriented toward the Disneyesque notion of "community." But it is as much a facade of community as is the old movie set for a John Wayne Western. How, on such a pessimistic account, can any sense of genuineness and authenticity be rehabilitated? Is there a place for "real" intimacy and "real" community and "real" emotion within the very postmodern discourse that manufactures its icons, within the very technologies that are enabling us to churn out replicas of the real thing, within a global economy that predetermines whose "culture" will be offered for sale under the guise of "entertainment industries"? Our communities often have the overstated facades of the village market, the postmodern pastiche, but are they caring and "intimate" communities?

> There is so much compassion [today] that people complain of 'compassion fatigue.' Yet this distracted compassion is not the *caritas* of traditional times, but a displaced, viscerated compassion churned out by the culture industry that is really more like pity. *Caritas* binds humanity together whereas pity isolates and divides people into those who have the luxury to look down on others versus those who are desperate. (p. 26)

I do not want to accompany Meštrović on his next trip into issues of rage and violence--not at all--but I have to wonder if he may have a point:

> Weeping, abusing, raging, and words are no longer adequate routes for channelling emotions and all of these reactions are more tightly regulated than they ever were in history. This is a neo-Orwellian consequence of extending the love of the machine to social life. In the modernist desire to make social life function as smoothly as a machine, there is no emotional space for *traditional and inner-directed idiosyncrasies* such as rage and abuse.... An important channel for catharsis has been blocked.... The end result may not be the desired climate of tolerance, but a potentially dangerous condition of repressed hate that makes ethnic cleansing a metaphor for our times. (pp. 89-90)

Meštrović is clearly not advocating a reinstatement of male hegemony and violence in the name of the all too real emotions that support them. His point is that much "postemotional therapy" (like "anger management") sanitizes emotions and blocks catharsis. As a consequence, we have the frightful phenomenon of the "walking time bomb" that no one knows how to defuse. It is interesting indeed that one of the common discourses about male violence today is built upon the notion that violence represents a quest for power in the face of feelings of impotence; impotence based in the inability of the violent man to express his vulnerabilities in more authentic and verbal ways. Violence represents a failure, in the first instance, to control one's emotions and emotional life. It represents a failure to find that connection with Other that he most fervently desires. His blaming of Other for not meeting his needs covers his own failure. On Meštrović's account it also represents a failure in society.

It is easy enough to speculate on the implications for intimate relation in "post-emotional society." But interesting (albeit apocalyptic) though Meštrović's rant on postemotional society may be, its usefulness hinges on questions he leaves largely unexamined. They are questions about the Self that he would likely say have been appropriated by the Disneyites. What *are* emotions, and how will men, and women, know when they meet them?

Engendering Emotion

Lutz's (1996) article helps us to decenter *emotions*--surely the main building blocks of intimate relation--from their *essential* place in the "dark recesses of inner life," in a stable self, and in the "heart":

> In Western academic discourse, emotions have begun to move from their culturally assigned place at the center of the dark recesses of inner life and are being depicted as cultural, social, and linguistic operators.... As both an analytic and an everyday concept in the West, emotion, like the female, has typically been viewed as something natural rather than cultural, irrational rather than rational, chaotic rather than ordered, subjective rather than universal, physical rather than mental or intellectual, unintended and uncontrollable, and hence often dangerous. (p. 151)

To the extent that the excess of emotions define the female and even the threat of the feminine for men in our culture--thus serving to pathologize and subjugate women--the denial, suppression and control, and rationalizing of emotions serve to define and pathologize the male. Conventional discourse about men's ways of controlling "their" emotions, represented in the cliché, "Why can't men cry," pervades this essay so far. Lutz, echoing Meštrović's point about rage and abuse (though in a less polemical fashion) helps us to thicken the question: "*The metaphor of control implies something that would otherwise be out of control, something wild and unruly, a threat to order*" (p. 154). Emotions are, for many men, an aspect of themselves to be feared and thus denied until they spill over. Rage, in particular, is to be feared by the enraged person as well as by their Others.

Our cultural/genderal constructions of emotion work in tandem with our constructions of intimacy. The boundary between inside and outside seems a key notion:

> When emotion is defined, as it also is in the West, as something inside the individual, it provides an important symbolic vehicle by which the problem of the maintenance of social order can be voiced. A discourse that is concerned with the expression, control, or repression of emotions can be seen as a discourse on the crossing back and forth of that boundary between inside and outside, a discourse we can expect to see in more elaborate

> forms in periods and places where social relations appear to be imminently overturned. (p. 154)

By the very processes of pathologizing *men and women* (too little and too much, too much external and too much internal, as the stories go) in particular ways, our gendered constructions of emotion serve as remarkably effective social boundaries. This is perhaps particularly true to the extent and in the ways that family persists as the primary site of intimacy. The family on this view has always been something of a customs house, charged with authority to keep sovereign selves in order at the border crossing: the treacherous nexus of the public and the private. To the extent that *intimacy* represents emotion-charged relation, it could be seen as a control mechanism functional to social stability. Its very gendered dialectics are part of its functionality on that account.

Lutz's article focuses most clearly on the subjugation of women by the discourses of emotion and emotionality. But we do need to ask by what sort of gymnastics men's emotions become women's pain and responsibility:

> The cultural construction of women's emotion can thus be viewed not as the repression or suppression of emotion in men... *but as the creation of emotion in women*. Because emotion is constructed as relatively chaotic, irrational, and antisocial, its existence vindicates authority and legitimates the need for control. By association with the female, it vindicates the distinction between and hierarchy of men and women. And the cultural logic connecting women and emotion corresponds to and shores up the walls between the spheres of private, intimate (and emotional) relations in the (ideologically) female domain of the family and the public, formal (and rational) relations in the primarily male domain of the marketplace. (p. 166).

A certain kind of male power is engendered by "shoring up the walls" between public and private through the construction of emotion. But when men "win" in such an ideological project, they lose. Emotions, like everything else, must succumb to free trade. Farrell says that women are now in charge. Gray might implicitly agree, but he seeks to replace the armed guards of the emotional border crossing with self-policing under the now benign guidance of a male psychology. It is tempting to continue to advocate that men simply become more emotional (on Lutz' account of emotion as "created in women," that could read "more like women"). If men wish to be intimate with women, they will have to reconstruct emotion and its expression.

Rethinking Power and Intimacy

Edgar and Glezer (1994), in a provocative and dialectical essay, pose some important questions about the intersections of *gender, power* and *intimacy* in a postmodern context for our consideration. In the first half of the essay they draw on the quintessential modernist Anthony Giddens to present an optimistic account of power shifts in male-female intimacy. These shifts result, on his account, from a later-Modern separation of home and workplace; a separation that offers spaces for women's power to grow and for patriarchal power (though not necessarily men's power) to decline or become irrelevant. Women are coming to set the terms of intimate relation within the space of the "haven in a heartless world" (Lasch, 1977) and in so doing they find power:

> Romantic love... must be seen in association with the creation of motherhood, childhood and the family home. It is important because it elevates the nature of intimacy over lust as the basis for sexual relationships and presumes in its idealized form that the other is made whole through close communication.... *This removes sexuality from reproduction and it makes intimacy dependent upon the creation of a mutual narrative biography....* Romantic love was essentially feminized love..... With the division of spheres of family and work life the fostering of love became predominantly the task of women.... '*Women became specialists of the heart.*' (citing Giddens, p. 120)

Giddens leaves much unsaid here. Many women, and some men, would tell stories of struggles--successful or not--to create such a "mutual narrative biography" with their partners. I argue earlier that women's ascribed role as emotional brokers gets men off the intimacy hook. But Giddens would argue that the proverbial level playing field is not as weighted in men's favor as it might seem; the renegotiation of traditional roles being "an expression of women's power, a contradictory assertion of autonomy in the face of deprivation.... *Insofar as male power is based on the compliance of women and the economic and emotional services which women provide, it is under threat.*" (citing Giddens, p. 122).

Paradoxically, it is Cartesian rationality and privileging of reason (allied with science) that enables both the separation of sexuality and reproduction from romantic love (for reasons of "efficiency") and, Giddens' argument goes, the advent of women's power within the family. The very historical evolution of the notion that children require and deserve careful nurturing and development, and the "idealization of the mother and wife and the division of spheres which presented the female role as one designed to foster love, subordination in the home and separation from the outside public world" (p. 120), serve to keep men "at a distance from this burgeoning realm of feminine intimacy in the home" (p. 122). This "burgeoning realm" is a new incarnation of the Victorian feminization that caused so much consternation in men.

Giddens is optimistic in his vision for intimacy in our time. He argues that technologies can be harnessed, that "pure relationship" is possible, that a popular resistance will emerge. Such resistance will demand the use of technologies to "recreate locality and kin contacts and re-embed the individual in global communities of shared experience"; a reskilling process; and new kinds of trust: "Basic trust in the continuity of the modern world is required, despite the existential dread that exists, *but more important is the trust relationship built up in the world of private family life*" (pp. 119-120). Women, Giddens says, will be centered in their role as the "*emotional revolutionaries of modernity*" (p. 122). Intimacy moves from a private to a public, even global realm.

Giddens obviously buys the claims made by the burgeoning communication technologies on behalf of a "global village." I am relieved that Edgar and Glezer, in the second and perhaps less optimistic part of their essay, have their feet firmly on the ground. They acknowledge that we may be on the threshold of a brave new world of intimate relation and gender equality within the family, but they wonder about the implications of Giddens' "pure intimacy" for children and for the continuity of the family. The family is clearly still a site of oppression:

> This exposure of the gender construction of maleness and femaleness with unequal social values puts domination at centre stage, and the concepts of categorization and stratification *take priority over the dynamic of early childhood socialization....* The ideal of close personal relationships within a system of family cohesion and harmony is thus exposed as a cultural prescription which [still] legitimizes male dominance, and is supported by the ideology of motherhood and home-making which justifies self sacrifice on their part rather than exposing the constraints imposed upon them. (p. 123)

Edgar and Glezer do not fret that men are being excluded by newly-empowered women from the intimate sphere of the family. Men may be entering a new era of intimate relation, they suggest, precisely because they are more and more *expected* to take an equal part and responsibility for the work of intimacy. They are optimistic, but on somewhat different terms than is Giddens.

The Saturated Self

Kenneth Gergen (1991) in his book, *The Saturated Self,* sets out to locate the shifting (perhaps even fading) "self" in the era we could signify as postmodern/global/technological. The confluence of ideologies and material conditions related to these trends is a potent brew indeed:

- As we absorb the views, values, and visions of others; and live out the multiple plots in which we are enmeshed, we enter a postmodern consciousness.... Social saturation brings with it a general loss in our assumption of true and knowable selves. (pp. 15-16)

- The vocabulary of moral feeling, loyalty, and inner joy is.... derived from a *romanticist* conception of the self.... [This view was replaced] by a *modernist* view of personality, in which reason and observation are the central ingredients. Postmodernism tends to extinguish... both realities. (p. 19)

- One detects amid the hurly-burly of contemporary life a new constellation of feelings or sensibilities, a new pattern of self-consciousness. This syndrome may be termed *multiphrenia*, generally referring to the splitting of the individual into a multiplicity of self-investments. This condition is partly an outcome of self-population, but partly an outcome of the populated self's efforts to exploit the potentials of the technologies of relationship.... Liberation becomes a swirling vertigo of demands. (pp. 73-75)

- Objectivity... is achieved through a coalition of subjectivities.... *One's self becomes populated with others.* (pp. 86-87).

- The focus on how things get constructed is, after all, born of doubt--doubt of all authority and all claims to truth. Yet, once this doubt is unleashed, one confronts the awful irony that all one's doubts are also subject to doubt. (p. 134)

- One is thus prepared to enter a third and final stage, in which self is replaced by the reality of relatedness--or the transformation of 'you' and 'I' to 'us.' (p. 156)

- The technologies engender a multiplicious and polymorphic being who thrives on incoherence, and this being grows increasingly enraptured by the means by which this protean capacity is expressed. We enter the age of *techno-personal* systems. (p. 173)

- In the search for committed intimacy the postmodern individual confronts a startling and dismaying contrast between the search for an inner core of being and the scattered multiplicity of the populated self. (p. 176)

Relationships become a "carnival," a panopoly of choices among fragments of selves, amorphous self-other boundaries, and even geographic dispersion. The whole world can be an intimate, if only for a moment. Nostalgia for the real and authentic may lead to new subjugations and new definitions of community including "cardboard communities" (what Meštrović calls "Disneyification"). Sincerity, a "dying swan," may be transformed into "instrumental action." It is a strange time indeed, a time of "ersatz being." It is perhaps not surprising, on this account, that Gergen has so little to say by way of prognosis or conclusion. He says we must "set the signifiers free," foster new metaphors for relation, "move beyond the speakable to action" (pp. 258-259). Intimacy, like manhood, becomes performative, created on the go. Authenticity and even the stories we tell of our-Selves, become ephemeral. Is such a scene a crisis, or an opportunity?

Intimate Citizenship

Where Meštrović focusses in rather dark terms on a particular "strand" of manufactured emotion and nostalgia, a recycling of authenticity, Plummer (inspired by Giddens' optimism) chooses to see intimacy in our time as an opening for a new politics of "sexual story telling":

> I call this *intimate citizenship* because it is concerned with all those matters linked to our most intimate desires, pleasures and ways of being in the world.... For some, natural hierarchies of order and dominance, of a fixed place in the world with a fixed agenda, of a stable story, are visibly crumbling. Now, and I suspect increasingly in the future, people may have to make decisions around the control (or not) over one's body, feelings, relationships; access (or not) to representations, relationships, public spaces, etc.; and socially grounded choices (or not) about identities, gender experiences, erotic experiences.... *Intimate citizenship... is a loose term which comes to designate a field of stories, an array of tellings, out of which new lives, new communities and new politics may emerge.* (pp. 151-152)

What, then, are the signs of the shifting or opening of new stories of intimacy:

- Family stories: Stories of ‘families we choose or create’ rather than ‘biological/blood families.’ *The question now has increasingly become: how am I to live my life with others?* (p. 154)

- Emotional stories: Lots of feelings--including ways of feeling not even recognized as feeling-- can get written out of stories we tell of our lives.... *Feelings are also part of politics--of empowerment and diminution; the social worlds of passion, esteem, rage and love*.... [New] worlds of feeling become specified for others to grasp. (pp. 154-155)

- Representational stories: How the intimate can be imagined, portrayed, represented has traditionally been at the centre of the regulation of the intimate.... What can be said about the intimate, how it can be imagined and depicted, is curiously the parallel story of censorship and freedom of speech and expression.... What stories can be told about visual pleasure--what one sees, how one sees, how one feels about what is seen? (pp. 155-156)

- Bodily stories: For most of the modern period, stories of the body have placed ‘it’ primarily in a fixed, well-bounded, causal and ‘natural’ framework: the body has been separated from mind, culture and science, and seen to rigorously shape our lives from within--through gender, through age, through disease and ultimately through death.... *Is there a way of telling stories about the body that enable us to see it not simply as a bounded, ‘there,’ ‘in us,’ but something which resonates socially?* (p. 156)

- Gender stories: Running through almost all our stories is a tale of gender--a tale which organises difference and ‘others,’ setting up boundaries and otherness.... *But a wholly different set of emerging stories speak as if there will be no such thing as gender in the future, indeed there really is no gender now.* For gender is really a ‘science fiction,’ a ‘discourse,’ even a bad habit: the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly regulatory frame that congeals over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.... (pp. 157-158).

- Erotic stories: Since at least the late 1960's new stories of sexuality have been in the making. The dominant narrative which placed the world of the erotic largely within a framework of procreation, coitus and family life has clearly been dispersed, much to the horror of traditionalists.... A first striking set of stories are emerging around 'safer sex'.... In North America this has meant many new practices proliferating alongside their accompanbying tales.... *A new world of innovative 'outercourse' has emerged.* (pp. 158-159)

- Identity stories: Whereas once identities were stable, fixed, bounded, ascribed and taken for granted, in the modern world they have become increasingly fragmented, destabilised, trivialised, mutable, and problematic.... Some stories move in very bleak directions... but *equally come stories in which new identities take us beyond the limiting categories of the past, and start forming identities which are forged around relationships and conscious choices*. (p. 160)

Even as I offer endless critique of the status quo, I tremble at the prospect of finding a sense of continuity and security in this evolving new world of fragmented stories and identity dispersion. I say this even knowing that certainty and stability is a dangerous fiction, albeit often purchased at great cost. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. If Cartesian certainty is the demon, we cannot also refuse the new contingency no matter how frightening it may be. Plummer's argument points to the imperative of a new narrative ethics. If the old ethics is an ethics of foundations and origins of things that turns out to *on the face of things* to be more congenial to men than to women; an ethics of what can be told, by whom it can be told, and how it can be told--what new ethics will replace it? Plummer looks to a future of "fragmented" stories, a time when "grand stories" that totalize are no longer possible. Certainty about anything is in free fall. Modernity, though, is not apt to give up its illusive certainties so readily.

Terrible Intimacies

It is by now a commonplace in feminist discourses about male violence toward women that violence and patriarchy are mutually supportive concepts. Barbara Whitmer (1997) works to bring together a multitude of ideological constructions that lie at the core of our cultural identity, at the core of violence, and at the core of men's problems in intimate relation:

> *The violence mythos* is a collection of beliefs that articulates attitudes in western culture about violence.... The violence mythos includes the war hero myth, the victimizer/victim dynamic of exploitation, the mind/body dualism, the cowboy myth, the myth of competitive individualism, the theory of innate violence, the myth of male aggression, the military-industrial complex, technological determinism (especially destructive technology), the subordination of women, the myth of the superiority of rationality over emotion and creativity, and the myth of the elite human species. The violence mythos contains these shattered traces of trauma in the Western cultural imagination. (Whitmer, 1997, p. 1)

Whitmer poses the perplexing question of how violence can seemingly be condemned, and yet still be represented so ubiquitously in actuality and in ideology in our society. How is it that men can so often still be violent with impunity? Is there a meaning or rationale for male violence, some elusive theory yet to be developed--or do we have to accept the tiresome essentialist arguments that "men have these urges," and "men are hard-wired for violence"? These are important question indeed, but I am drawn to another more elusive set of questions about relationality: what do we make of such *terrible* intimacies of violence as war, "domestic" violence, beatings of homosexual men, Ku Klux Klan lynchings, torture, and football, among others? My troublesome question is not so much whether such phenomena represent intimacy in any clear sense (that question by itself invites a terrible analysis that always seeks to blame the victim), but more whether we can learn anything useful *about* manhood and intimacy through examining such phenomena.

It may be useful to focus first on war. Stories abound of wartime relationships between soldiers and their loved ones back home; kindled quickly, carried by the currents of the time, sustained by hope and precious correspondence, all too often shattered by death and injury. Stories abound of intimacy between soldiers. It is a moment when the imperative to maintain the "line" between men can be momentarily forgotten with impunity; due, perhaps, to the temporary and traumatic nature of war, the risk that life may fracture at any moment, the imperative to look after one's buddies in a time of great need. Wecter says that for many men the war years are "the one great lyric passage in their lives" (cited in Gray, 1992, p. 25). There can even be a strange beauty, Gray says, in the spectacle and the new experience. When hostilities cease, the task of rebuilding begins. I cite earlier Gurian's startling revelation that the number of Vietnam war veterans who have committed suicide is greater than the number killed in battle. This is perhaps the first war where the dominant fiction breaks through so blatantly before the battle is over; the first war where disenchantment with hegemonic leadership could be so widely expressed.

That war has lasting implications for intimacy is perhaps, then, beyond dispute. But I digress from my question. What meanings inhere in the relation/connection across the "front" that divides the combatants, those who are supposed to be enemies? The touching Christmas celebration between the two little groups of Allied and German soldiers in the anti-war movie, *A Midnight Clear*, unsettles our notion of war and alerts us to such possibilities. The scene, set in a quiet forest area, focuses on the common ground of humanity: men sacrificed to a war not of their making, men missing their holiday rituals and loved ones, men searching for intimacy and meaning. As the little celebration ends and the bullets fly again with deadly accuracy and consequence, we might wonder about a broader connection between men who find themselves shooting at each other. How does the "mind-body split" (Whitmer) that sustains war and makes it possible to kill the "enemy," break down for this brief moment and then reconstitute itself? I search for words to express the question of how enemies really see each other as men. If Lacan is right in saying that love is radically narcissistic, how do we understand the apparent *hatred* in a relation of violence (leaving aside the fact that hatred is manufactured in the training of soldiers)? Can hatred exist outside of love or the search for it?

It is considered treasonous to question the possibility of intimacy between the two sides in war, but do we seem mightily preoccupied with questions about the "bond" between perpetrators of domestic violence and their victims. The very word "domestic" draws a frame around the relation to distinguish it from one of ordinary or stranger violence or war. The combatants/intimates are in relation, fused together until one of them leaves, seeks external intervention, or dies. It was all too fashionable in the earlier years of domestic violence research (really only two or three decades) to speak of the "dance of violence" to indicate that the couple contributes equally to the violent relation. Women are often portrayed still, in this discourse, as "inviting" or even "liking" the violence, as being neurotic, hypochondriachal, uppity "ball breakers"--the blame the victim list goes on. What is left out of this story?

James McBride (1995) develops a very compelling account of male violence in *War, Battering, and Other Sports*. He cites the example of torture during the Spanish Inquisition to illustrate his point about truth and bodily suffering. Whose truth does the torture yield:

> The point of torture was not to elicit the victim's truth *from* her body, but to inscribe the torturer's truth *on* the body of the victim.... Violence is therefore a writing on the body, which makes visible what has been hidden; yet , the locus of its hiddenness does not lie in the body of the victim but in the imagination of the torturer. *The torturer... seeks to know [inscribe] his own truth....* 'The veiled citizen woman remains an other... who conceals truth' (citing duBois, p. 25)

McBride says that "As a sign of domination in an androcentric social order, battering as praxis produces 'women' (p. 27). Man's hidden purpose is to know his own truth. The more man violates or denies Woman/women (or the homosexual man who represents an even greater threat perhaps), the more he speaks the "secret which eludes him" (p. 26). Violence is ultimately self/Self defeating: "She... represents the sign of male unhappiness and is duly the subject of male resentment and anger.... His own truth, *embodied in woman*, will ultimately not yield to violence and hence, as frustration mounts, so, too, does the level of violence" (p. 26). He must "beat the shit out of her [himself]" (p. 28). He can never really articulate what she has done wrong, because she has done nothing wrong. It is his shit, his "self-alienation," and it is ultimately unreachable through the only way he knows-- violence. The fact that violence is utterly futile eludes him.

McBride shows that the language of all violences casts Other (even if biologically male) as Woman "whose being is opened up to the subject and made available for penetration, domination, and dissolution.... The 'losers' are... thereby shamed and humiliated, bearing the signs of womanly submission" (p. 152). On a psychoanalytic account, "*Woman's allegedly defective body becomes the means by which men know their perfection*. Her wounding is his blessing" (p. 155). Woman must "die" for Man's sins, for the sake of his anxieties about castration, the fiction, death itself. Woman must "die" on behalf of his denial of the feminine. Irigaray says that "[Man] simultaneously honors his mother for her sacrifice but reviles her power over him.... He feels the need to '*make the blood flow again*'" (citing Irigiray, pp. 166-167). Man, on this account, needs the "figure of castration/castrated figure" to sustain his own "psychic economy" (p. 172).

The terrible truth must be hidden at all costs. The figure can be woman, children, Saddam Hussein, helpless My Lai villagers; the penetration vaginal or anal or entirely symbolic; the war domestic or global. The war must go on, it seems, for as long as the current phallic regime remains in office: "Whether it be war or football, the game is really endless. The phallus as that which is both erected and seen is *always in danger* of being lost" (p. 165). If men seem "naturally violent," as the claim goes, it is not about being "hardwired," but not being "hard" enough. Woman/women are always an absent (if not all too present) presence, currency to stave off yet again the unbearable apprehension.

The limit cases also expose *emotions* as hierarchical construction and, Whitmer says, as "absent presence" in discourses of violence. On Whitmer's account, anger must be valued for what it can tell us about trouble spots in relationships; rehabilitated rather than excused, extinguished or managed. Her point echoes Meštrović's. Anger needs to be deconstructed, owned by men, valued as a sign of something gone terribly amiss. Anger is a "problem" only in a culture that valorizes the "violence mythos" and authorizes violent *expression* of feelings while viewing vulnerability and admission of vulnerability as weaknesses--*for men*. It is entirely predictable, on this view, that women will be held responsible for men's behaviors including acts of violence. It is equally predictable that women will be seen as responsible for the creation of intimacy (as if intimacy could be created by one person in a dyadic relation). It is a commonplace to say that anger is a "secondary emotion" that covers other more "real" ones.

It may be a travesty to suggest an "intimacy," terrible or otherwise, in all of these examples. We do not need more victim-blaming or excuses for collective inaction on questions of domestic violence or any kind of violence including war. But matters are never quite so simple as they seem. We need to think more about what unites us, perhaps; less about what separates and violates.

Discourses of Intimacy

Kathy Weingarten (1991) offers some fresh insights on the nature of intimacy and the problematics of traditional intimacy discourses. She relates the prevailing intimacy discourses to two different root meanings: the Individual Capacity (IC) discourse to *intus*, meaning "within"; and the Quality of Relatedness (QR) discourse to *intimare*, meaning "to make known." These discourses reflect a tension between intimacy as a quality or potential that rests within an individual, and intimacy as a product of some relationship process. This tension is perhaps all too apparent in my essay to this point. It is time to try to thicken and explicate it. I expend a great deal of energy in problematizing manhood as it relates to "its" world. Weingarten's essay demands a re-examination of the basis for such a project--or at least some serious questions about where it might lead. As she points out, one of the problems is that we totalize relationships (not to mention genders) rather than looking at the multitude of interactions that constitute our daily lives.

What is her IC discourse about:

> Intimacy is a capacity that rests within an individual.... The discourse suggests that self-disclosure, often of personal feelings, is the way this capacity is expressed.... Lerner's view is that intimacy is centrally connected to the individual's capacity to become an expert on the self. Implicit in this view is that there is a self capable of being discovered and understood, a self that has opinions, values, beliefs, feelings, and so on.... *Embedded in the Individual Capacity discourse of intimacy is a belief in a unitary, skin-bounded self that is at odds with a social constructionist view of the self.* (pp. 287-289)

Only lately have we admitted the possibility of multiple and changing selves to this discourse of intimacy. Goolishan, a social constructionist, enriches the discourse by reminding us of what should be obvious: that selves are constructed intersubjectively. "The nature of self (is) an intersubjective phenomena-- a product of telling stories to each other about ourselves. In this post-modern view we are as many potential selves as we are creative story makers and tellers" (p. 289). If the aim is to strenthen intimacy we are apt, in this conception, to try to put our "best" selves, our best stories, forward in relation to Other. Are the stories then merely capricious, smoothed with ~~the intention~~ of ensuring a positive view of our-selves? Perhaps "real" intimacy would be about daring to reveal the shadow sides of our "real" but multi-facetted selves to the Other.

The IC discourse leads quite naturally into the essentialist epigenetic Freudian view. Chodorow's rehabilitation of Freud raises the question: Which gender is deficient in this essential capacity for intimacy? I claim in the strongest terms that men do not have the same capacity for intimacy as women do. On the other hand:

> If one has a point of view that is less saturated with the biases of the Individual Capacity discourse, one can imagine that men and women are equally capable--though perhaps not equally desirous--of behaving intimately and restraining from non-intimate interactions. With such a belief, one can more readily work toward the production of intimate interactions. (p. 290)

The QR discourse, on the other hand, "construes intimacy as a product of a kind of *relatedness* in which individuals are able deeply and extensively to know each another" (p. 287). On such a view of intimacy, we cannot merely demand that we be accepted for who we "really" are. Weingarten says, provocatively, "If a man loves sitting in a rowboat fishing, then those who wish to be intimate with him may find themselves in it with him" (p. 292). But even if men are truly from Mars, they cannot retreat with impunity to their caves (or their rowboats):

> A core metaphor that is used by those whose work is influenced by the Quality of Relatedness discourse is that of *closeness/distance*. People who think of intimacy as a relational process, but not necessarily also a stage-based one, often use the metaphors of closeness/distance or pursuer/distancer to discuss intimacy.... [But] since non-intimate interactions frequently involve the domination of one person by another... *attention to the metaphor of closeness/distance may obscure crucial power issues in the interaction*. (pp. 293-294)

The QR discourse is often expressed in terms of stage theories-- but family-related rather than individual stages (in an important sense, perhaps, the two are very closely related). Wynne is cited by Weingarten as an important contributor to this discourse. He is well-known in early family therapy literature for his concept of *pseudomutuality*: "If the epigenetically earlier stages of relatedness have been bypassed, these infatuations [in affairs between near strangers] are notoriously likely to collapse altogether or to be transformed into what I have called pseudomutuality." (p. 293). How do we know what is "real" and what is "pseudo" here? Weingarten suggests we would be better served to focus on "intimate and non-intimate interactions" (presumably as defined by the participants, though clearly already embedded in the kinds of stories made available by the culture) than on qualities inhering in the relationship. It is perhaps a subtle distinction at first glance, but an important one. She wants to open up discursive possibilities.

If both discourses are limiting of human potential for connection, what is Weingarten's vision?

> *Intimate interaction occurs when people share meaning or co-create meaning and are able to coordinate their actions to reflect their mutual meaning-making*. Meaning can be shared through writing, speech, gesture, or symbol. In the process of co-creating or sharing meaning, individuals have the experience of knowing and being known by the other. Intimate interactions can happen with one or more people, in actual or imagined encounters. Refraining from meaning-making and providing, imposing, rejecting, and misunderstanding meaning are associated with non-intimate interaction. Repeated intimate interaction may produce an experience of intimacy, while repeated non-intimate

> interactions usually interfere with or inhibit relational patterns that lead to the sharing or co-creation of meaning. (Weingarten, 1991, pp. 294-295)

Weingarten reminds us anew of the dangers in essentialist thought, no matter how we/I might try to qualify and justify it. If many men do in fact have difficulties with intimacy, it may be more useful to frame those difficulties in terms of "non-intimate interactions that have potential for new meanings," than to pathologize them as "witholding important parts of their-selves" (even if this clearly also seems true). Such non-intimate interactions are embedded in men's cultural meaning-creation, the cultural stories that inform their lives. I immediately think here of the workplace, the coffee shop, the locker room and of course the rowboat. Still, there is a risk. The essense of intimacy here would be in the "daring" to find or be faced with *new* meanings, as much as daring to reveal more of their "real" and fixed/fixated selves. I sense that the former, the unknown, represents the greater risk.

If intimacy is really about allowing our real but ever-changing selves to be co-created with Other, such co-creation would not unproblematic. Meaning represents the great battleground of identity:

> Viewing intimacy as made up of intimate and non-intimate interactions forces us to attend closely to non-intimate interactions not solely as impediments to intimate ones but, in their own right, as interactions that may demean, delimit, define, diminish, demoralize, or devastate others.... *Meaning is used to connect or to dominate.* (p. 302)

Weingarten's view prompts me to think of intimacy in terms of some sort of *meta-intimacy*-- could we think of intimacy as a matter of a co-creation of understandings about interactions that we agree we will consider as intimate and that we agree we will seek out? Intimacy may be created in the maelstrom of *discourse about the discourses* that we will empower and those that we will not. We do not have to talk the same, but we have to come to some meta-understandings about how we will value differences. We have to agree, in Weingarten's terms, to participate in meaning-making, to provide meaning, not withdraw from meaning-making, not impose or reject meaning. The ability to not understand, to allow not only for the communion of shared experience but the excitement and mystery of difference, even seemingly unbridgeable difference, seems an exceedingly important issue for Cartesian man:

> [Co-creation] requires the 'act of recognizing in another person another center of consciousness.' According to Gurevitch, this may mean that, in the process of moving

> from the 'inability to understand' to the 'ability to understand,' *one may need to develop the 'ability to not understand.'*" (p. 295).

There are, as Weingarten intimates, important power dimensions in such an enterprise. How might a meta-intimacy frame the conversation about how matters of power, power difference and even the abuse of power will be negotiated? We might try to imagine the discourses of deconstruction and co-creation of *power* between "intimates":

> Women try to protect themselves from men's historically situated, greater control of meaning-making that in the sexual arena is supported by men's greater physical strength. A strategy that women are taught and develop includes forming an emotional connection to a man in the hopes that, if intimacy develops, aggressive attack will be less likely.... I think it is sobering to consider that we may know very little about women's or men's sexuality under conditions in which *women are not fearful that their sensual exuberance may be taken advantage of and men are not striving to prove their virility.* (pp. 301-302)

What a "powerful" thought about the two solitudes of relations between men and women. Neither solitude can be spoken with clear voice. Weingarten does not downplay questions of men's power or the abuses of male power in intimate relation--far from it--but she helps us to see openings in the impasses we often see between "male" and "female" discourses and points of view. And then I read her (1997) book, *The Mother's Voice*. Since her 1991 article, she has struggled with breast cancer. She writes in the form of a critical autobiography, a reflection on her "co-creation" of herself in relation to family and the (largely male and traditional) medical establishment. She accomplishes this without blame, but with great clarity about where gendered responsibility and hegemony rests. Her book exemplifies her notion that intimacy is always a co-creation and a possibility.

Weingarten's work points the way to some new answers to a set of questions that has troubled me for some time: Can we say that an adult's (usually a parent's) relation to a child is one of intimacy? Can we say that a teacher and adult student are "intimate" without conjuring up visions of abuse or exploitation? Can we say that there is intimacy between a human service professional and their client where a trust relationship exists and very personal information is shared? What of mentors and mentees, supervisors and employees? What of clergy and parishioners? I want to argue that a relation could not be called "intimacy" if there is a power difference between two persons. On the same viewpoint, a relation could not be called intimacy if one person is more responsible for nurturing or socializing or protecting another. The power and responsibility dimensions may be based upon notions of social role and responsibility and of expertise; not to mention things such as gender, race and ethnicity, perceived social station.

But if we are prepared to see intimacy not as a unitary or essential phenomenon inhering in a relationship, but rather as a process of co-creation between persons, then perhaps such relations as I cite can be seen as having elements of intimacy. That does not take away important issues of responsibility and justice, or professional ethics. We carry multitudes of roles with people in our lives. To view intimacy in terms of "intimate and non-intimate interactions," as Weingarten advocates, opens up fruitful areas for thought, and helps to release us from the binary prison. It may open up particular issues for men, taught as they are to separate parts of their lives and to deploy power in particular and hierarchical ways.

It is no longer possible to sustain the notion of intimacy as some stable, apolitical state inhering in two sovereign and unitary Selves. As Weingarten (1991) succinctly puts it, "There are politics nestled in the heart of intimacy" (p. 285).

Chapter Ten

CONVERSATIONS WITH MEN

Ron, 51, Clergyman.

"Help us be part of the universe."

I'm really glad you called me for this interview. I hope I have something to offer. I must say that the confidentiality thing isn't a concern for me-- I feel like I have nothing to lose and much to gain . . . . It's my 51st birthday today. A lot of people called me today to wish me a happy birthday. My twelve year old daughter was really impressed by this, and said, "Gee, Dad, you sure have a lot of friends." I hesitated, wondering what to say to her, then decided to be honest: "No, Samantha, I don't really have any friends. I have a lot of acquaintances."

A lot of people can't figure out my fascination with guns and the military. I've always felt there is a place for the warrior. We need people who understand the diabolical so the rest of us can talk about peace. We need a highly trained and effective military to keep us safe.... Remembrance Day and playing the bugle have really specific meaning for me. It's one thing I do well! I remember as a little boy, my mom and dad talking about the news about the boys in the war, those who came back, those who didn't. It always stuck in my head that however right or wrong they might have been, their decision about what to do, how to be faithful, was to engage in that war. I think that deserves a lot more respect than it sometimes gets . . . . They went there as their best decision, and it cost them a whole bundle.... So for me, working with air cadets was actualizing some fantasies about being a warrior leader--but in a very productive way, teaching good citizenship.

I'm a chaplain at the Legion. A lot of these old veterans are not particularly religious with a capital R, but they still have this fantastic attachment to the padre. I've taken that seriously over the years and spent time with these guys when probably nobody else would have. I do it because I also understand that a lot of them are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. A lot of people don't understand that about them-- that drinking is self-medication to deal with a lot of the pain in their lives. They're all dying now, so what happens is that every time one of them dies, I get a phone call from those families.... At one of these funerals the other day, as I stood with the honor guard, I realized that I'd known a lot of them since 1978, and I realized that there must have been

30 or 40 people in that room that I've been intimately involved with, in the sense of being around for a major crisis or event in their life....

In a sense, this is my family, an extended tribe that I belong to.... My favorite mythological character would be Jethro, the priest of Midian. When the little tribes come out of the desert they say, "Will you come and preside over our festivals for us and help us to belong to the universe in some way or other?" And over the years, I've always felt like I've done that for all sorts of these little tribes of people. There was a little knot of people from the Ottawa Valley once, and some people from Cape Breton. We're not friends or confidantes. They call me to do the priestly thing whenever anything happens, but as far as ever calling me to visit them or anything, they would never do that. I suspect it's the same kind of separateness of a police officer, someone with a certain kind of authority; maybe a mythology that goes with the office. People see me as having moral authority. I don't get past that with many people in my life.

I've done ten funerals in the last week and a half-- and I was supposed to be on holidays! It's harder than people think. After a funeral is over, I want to be by myself, not with the people. I always thought there was something wrong with me.... I finally learned that I didn't have to apologize for being the way I am. I'm just different, and I now know that different is alright. The issue for me is that I've always felt very different, very marginal... very alone and separate and sometimes very lonely and inward-looking. It's interesting in talking to other ministers that this seems to be a common experience. A lot of us tend to be very introverted in the sense that the primary stuff is internal, not external.... The most important things that happen to me happen in my head. Like for example, I like to go hunting. It's not so much to kill animals as to just be alone.

The stuff in my church [ordination of gays] has been so brutal because people won't suspend judgement and think of others as different rather than wrong. That extends into socioeconomic stuff and everything else. I tell young couples getting married that places where you're similar won't take much work. The points of difference will need attention because most of us have been taught to see difference as negative.

My dad was chairman of the town council and he was also owned a hardware store and a lot of land. He was a very good manager so he was a wealthy and powerful person. My mother was a peasant lady who was very dogmatically sure of her right and wrongs and would champion unpopular causes like mad . . . . They were both older, confirmed single people when they married each other. They fought all the time. I can't even remember a time when they modelled anything intimate or affectionate. Friendly sometimes, but never intimate. It was so awkward around our family that you didn't even mention being involved or having any affection toward anybody because you were just mercilessly teased. Not only within the family but word got out to other people. Having any privacy was really impossible for me even if I did have a friend, which I didn't. In all these years I maybe had two people I'd call friends. They're far away now. It was just a terribly dysfunctional thing that I would never allow now; a total lack of respect and honor for other people.

My brain has always worked differently from other peoples'. When I was three years old, I could identify all the aircraft on those identification charts, and faster than anyone else.... When I hit grade one, I would continue to make these observations. The reaction was invariably negative. Everyone and the teacher would laugh at me. I remember the movie *Yellow Sky* and I wondered what it would be like to color the sky yellow, so I did. The teacher got mad and everybody started teasing me and I got the nickname, Ronnie No Brains. [Pauses, teary]. Even now that just generates all sorts of pain inside. Even now I overdo it with little children.... It was so awful for me.

Again, the only word that makes sense is "different." There was no one to talk to. Mom and Dad were out of the question. I remember one day I'd been working in a field and I saw a fox. I asked the guy on the next farm if he'd lost any chickens. He said no, then phoned the next day to say that he had. So I chased it down and shot it. I came in to the store and my uncle Harry said to me, "Oh, you're always reckless, always out to kill things." That was a real curse on me, saying that, because I wasn't. I wasn't any different from anyone else.... I really felt friendless and hopeless.

The fellows I did associate with all paired up with guys a year older. They all started touring around in cars, and my mom would never let me go. Anyway, one night I finally got out, and I got in the car with these people, and we toured around for a bit. And then they drove up to my house and said "You can get out now Ronnie, we're going to this party." And they put me out. And I just stood there, and they drove away, eight or ten of them in this car. And I'm not sure I can even tell you this without breaking up now . . . I just sat out in the back alley and cried and cried and cried. I couldn't even go in because my mother thought I was out having a good time. I'd be 14 or 15 at the time. This is just typical of many incidents of the awful nightmare of being a teenager in that little town. My defence was to create a fantasy world inside my head where I had lots of friends and I was in charge.

In University I was drifting, lost. There was nobody around who wanted to take the time to say anything to me. I played trumpet in the band-- third chair. The bandmaster finally asked me one day if I didn't want to move up, and I did. I guess I could've had a career in music.... Then I joined the Air Force. I think I came in second out of three hundred in everything but the physical.... In some ways getting married was a desperate attempt to find something.... But the Ronnie No Brains stuff still stuck through all of those years and events until a guy did some IQ testing when I was doing some work later at U of C. I scored very highly, and that was probably the first time I started to realize that maybe I might have something valuable to offer.... Still, though, all the Ronnie No Brains stuff, being fat and ugly and unwanted, were all hanging right there. And they *still* come back as nightmares sometimes, you know. In the most irrational ways, I can get into a thing with Barb and feel that way about what's going on--fat and ugly and unwanted. They are terrible wounded spaces.

I guess there are moments when I sort of withdraw and that's my usual way, to dive back inside when I feel threatened. I know there are times when Barb is troubled by that, I know that. It's a very deliberate act of will for me to open the door and crawl back out again. I understand if anything healthy is going to happen between us, I have to do that.... Intimacy is the practical kind of space of not being afraid of this person, of saying, "If it hurts once in a while it's joyful the rest of the time." Intimacy is the space where I lose consciousness, lose the need to draw the line. Like I could move into an intimate conversation with you, here and now, and lose consciousness of needing a physical space from you and that kind of thing. That also means that I lose fear.... John wrote of needing to "cast out fear" if you are in a loving relationship. Love is the antithesis of fear. Somebody, somewhere, needs to start setting the example of saying, "I trust you . . . ." When I met Barb I sensed she was a person I could learn to trust. She was honest. But then I had to learn to trust myself, to share the baggage and know she wouldn't go away.

What did I do with that lonely fearful kid? Probably deliberately teaching myself to be responsible, to own what I do and be accountable without fear. I am who I am and I start with that. I want people to like me, but not at the price of not being myself.... But there's still all this baggage, and suddenly you realize there's someone you can trust with all of it, who won't go away when you do. Even when I feel a million miles away... I say, in a way. "I don't care what you do with it."

One of the reasons I find Barb [second wife] attractive is that I can be with her and she sort of cruises around with people. That's something I've never been able to do. Women have this magnificent capacity to control and administer, to understand and order. As men we seem to miss the obvious. We just drive too hard or something. [Pauses]. I'm hesitating here because I also realize that's not good enough, it can be a cop-out for men.... We forget that we're sensing biological creatures, and we're different [men and women]. We have to attend and talk about those differences.... Barb is a friend, of course, but that gets complicated by all those other things.... Women have a competitive advantage now, having access to their whole person. In some ways I feel threatened being around women who are good at many things. For men, traditional roles are still more of a problem. Men say, "I'll withhold time, money, affection; and if that doesn't work I'm still bigger than you."

In spite of being overweight and out of shape, I still have this warrior inside who wants to go off and fight battles. Probably it's sublimated into fighting much more subtle battles, like verbal battles with men I meet in my work. I know I can't compete physically with these guys, but morally I can. I am the one who defines the battleground. I can also score points with women, because I've been trained to listen. Understand that I've never, ever betrayed that. A lot of men don't understand how to listen to their wives .

Yeh, I understand that I could be violent. I have been. I guess what my parents taught me about relationships was to turn the other cheek and be nice.... One of the most helpful things I've learned was recognizing that being an introverted person, my most uncontrolled part was verbal aggression. I shout a lot. I intellectualize. I write stuff, play my trumpet, shoot holes in paper.... I remember twice when I lost it in school. Usually I was the pussycat getting beat up. But once I broke a guy's nose and once I broke a guy's arm! Those were the only two times I ever retaliated.

I was at a camp for Scouts and their fathers recently.... I took them through that old Cherokee legend about testing the ambiguities of the circumference. The young man is on a pilgrimage to the four winds. Every time he confronts them, he triumphs over them, but still feels incomplete. At the end he comes back to the center and discovers there the most beautiful village he's ever seen in his life. He then realizes that he's come back where he started from and seen it for the first time.... Afterwards there was a lot of silence. Here's a masculine mythology, about the ambiguities. I can't even tell you without the tears. It was powerful for me, and yet intuitively here it is a part of other mens' experiences as well. I wish I could do that within the physical structure of the church- turn the rows into a circle. People aren't ready for that, it seems.

Essaying the conversation.

I approach Ron because I know that in his work he is a "witness" for a new kind of manhood and a new kind of relation between men and women, men and men. He readily, even eagerly, agrees to the interview; saying that at this point in his life he feels he has nothing to lose or to hide. I have a strong sense that he feels he may find something through our conversation. Between my original contact and the interview, Ron's picture appears on the front page of the paper playing *The Last Post* on his bugle for Remembrance Day. I'm struck both by the power of the picture and my imagination of the music, and by the images of incredible sadness and loss it represents and bears witness to. I want to understand what this moment, this most public of acts, represents to him as a man. I want to know, too, how he puts together such symbols of war with images of a new manhood.

From the very beginning of our conversation, there is much in what Ron has to say and what he represents that touches me at my core. He is very much into his story and very present, and I find this very engaging. His story intersects with mine at many poignant points. At several points in the conversation, I find myself struggling to keep focussed on Ron and his story; but I know that I must stay with him and set my own painful memories aside for the moment. It is not that I am afraid to show myself to him, and it is not that I think I must do some "social work" thing with him; but that it would be a violation somehow to turn to my story in the midst of his. It is difficult now, even from the distance of time, to remain focussed on *his* experiences and thoughts about intimate relation.

Ron feels, and feels deeply. He struggles, it seems, to express that feeling in other than priestly ways, ways that are acceptable to him in terms of his perception of what a man is. Our conversation seems different for him. Perhaps it is the safety of a "research" framework, perhaps it is that he does not have to be so priestly with me, perhaps it is that I so intently try to be in tune with the feelings he is expressing. As he sits with me in my study, his words and his whole being speak to his struggle. I know this with some certainty because I feel it within me as I he talks.

Few men would be able to express it as clearly as he does. I wonder if it might be the story of many men, if they could only find the words for it. If words are not found to share such pain, men are apt to feel trapped in the sense that the struggle is theirs alone.

I am reminded of Bly's (1990) point about the "wound": "Wherever the wound appears in our psyches, whether from alcoholic father, shaming mother, shaming father, abusing mother, whether it stems from isolation, disability, or disease, *that is precisely the place for which we will give our major gift to the community"* (p. 42). I find Bly's statement powerful because it flies in the face of so much of the traditional discourses (particularly in the human service professions I know best) that try to pathologize the wound. Ron's restorying of his painful childhood narrative is inspiring, and it is indeed his greatest wound that becomes his gift. If he is successful in his life, by whatever measure, it is because he is able to turn stories of wrenching pain and loneliness into stories of social goodness, and perhaps even intimacy. Feeling "different" is a constant theme in Ron's story, whether it is the intensely painful feelings of rejection in 'Fat Ronny's' difference, the misunderstood and unappreciated difference of the veterans, the 'unbelonging' difference of the little tribes, the Cherokee brave's solitary ritual journey to the circumference, or the 'no man's land' of the gay clergy in his church.

Ron works to re-story his own painful differences as desirable qualities, and in turn to celebrate the very idea of difference. And yet, "no man is an island" for long. Though eroding, the traditional cultural rules for men of Ron's generation still seem clear about sameness and difference. The story is so familiar as to seem trite. Do men feel, deep down, that they can ever measure up to the tradition, to some unitary standard of manhood, to themselves, to women? Do men feel free to deviate, to make their own rules, to, as Ron puts it, "use their whole person?" Do men feel free to be different, even in the face of powerful evidence that we are really all different? Ron struggles, against powerful forces within himself and perhaps even against the tide of his own life story, to get out of his inner life and into the world of intimacy. For him, as for any man who chooses to reflect on such matters, it is not a tidy and predictable world. Being a warrior all the time must be tiring.

It seems clear enough that Ron is intimate with his family by any criteria or measure. He expresses particular appreciation for Barb and how she can "cruise" around people. He sees the differences between men and women in essentialist terms as innate ones that we should celebrate and acknowledge. At the same time, he expresses envy, even apprehension, about women's ability to use their whole selves to "order and administer" relationships. He does not say that men should be like women. Rather, he would like other men, and himself, to learn some of those skills. For himself, he would like to bring the warring factions of his world--the inner and the outer--closer to some *rapprochement*.

Ron tells his daughter, "I don't have any friends." He is quite open about the ways he uses his work to find meaning and worth in life. His Biblical reference reflects a wonderful rewriting of the story of pain and loneliness--he finds meaning in helping the wandering tribes to "belong to the universe." There is obvious warmth and pride in the way he speaks of these tribes of people and his place in their lives. They belong to him, in a sense, and he to them. But we hear, too, a sense of regret, a sense of wanting and needing something more. He seems to say that he is not *really* intimate with the many people he knows in his capacity as clergyman. He uses the word, "intimacy," then goes on to say that the relationship is more one of separation and professional distance, "doing the priestly thing."

The authority of Ron's position does set him apart in some important ways. The relation of priest to "tribe" may seem an unequal one on many counts. And yet the minister is also servant to the flock. To minister is to bring the priest into very close contact with people in their times of greatest vulnerability and need. Can we possibly say that there is no intimacy, in his administering of the sacraments and his presiding over such profoundly joyous and sad rituals in the lives of people? Ron surely does much more than a priestly and vicarious thing--he is present to and agent in the intimacy of others. Perhaps his work could more accurately be described as that of an intimacy *broker*. He works with "ambiguity" and neither fears nor avoids it. He is a teacher, and there are many teachable moments in his work. The teaching is often direct, in words; sometimes ritualistic and ceremonial; sometimes implicit through example. Ron would like to do more (he mentions the idea of turning the pews around into a circle), but there is a sense that the people are not yet ready to give up the priestly figure at the head of the line.

In many ways Ron would be described by other men as a "man's man," a man in male spaces who talks straight and understands the world in male terms. He does the things many men do, but in a reflexive way. I wonder how many men know of his inner life or of the painful events in his life. He listens with the greatest of respect to the stories of old veterans at the Legion. I wonder if he is ever the one listened to. At the beginning of this study, I would want to problematize and even pathologize men's ordering and distancing in relationships. In the face of Ron's story and

Weingarten's provocative article, I am now more inclined to look for different modes, degrees, discourses, and spaces for intimacy. Intimacy at a distance and borrowed or brokered intimacy may not be enough to sustain a man totally, but they are important intimacies nonetheless. There are many ways to connect. There is a powerful sense of intimacy even in Ron's soulful playing of *The Last Post* for thousands of strangers on Remembrance Day.

Ken, 47, Technician

"I can control it on a dime."

You never would have known me, then. Unless I approached you, and it would be a strictly platonic, hands-reach thing. And that's about as close as I've ever let anyone come. Even Jean [his wife]. I brought all kinds of ghosts into the wedding... things I'd never tell her. Even years after we were married there were things I never would have told her. Things I still haven't told her, and her me probably. If I did, I'd have to emotionally explain why. That I couldn't do.... In 1980 we wouldn't be having this conversation. Who would ever know? God maybe. I don't know what I was afraid of. But I can be more open now. It's not that I couldn't give *you* something, or that I wouldn't like something from you. But the interplay is still too tender-- I would have to give too much of myself to receive from you.... People at work find that same quality in me very irritating.

Let me just sidetrack here. My Dad was an Eastern Canadian Indian, who left the Reserve. He broke into the white man's world, so to speak. He was one for never talking about how he felt. This is where I learned, from mimicking him. Sure, you smiled or you laughed at a joke or something, but that's as far as it went. Things that made you really happy, or sad, you never talked about. Mother was Scottish. It seemed like she imitated him too.... [silence]. All those qualities about being a father he did not have and would never have. And I don't think he, I don't think anyone could have told me that. I was always searching for something that wasn't there.... My Dad wasn't honest. He stole, he fought, he cheated. He beat my mother, he hit me many times. I don't know what for. You didn't know when it was coming-- just all of a sudden, 'bang" you got hit. It took me a long time to get over that. But you know, I probably have a lot of him in me to this day.

How would I have described the world as a kid? My friends' parents weren't like mine, even if they drank. I was always getting a beating, sometimes for defending my younger brothers and sisters against my older half-sister and brother. If anything happened in the house, "Oh it's Kenny again, fightin' Kenny." I just felt people didn't care.... But still, somehow, I knew the world wasn't against me. I was caught in this microcosm. This was home, and hell though it might be, it was better than no home at all.

I lost time in there somewhere when I was four or five years old. I can still see it, feel it, smell it. I remember waking up in the middle of the night. I was crying. I heard my uncle calling me:

“Kenny, come here, come here.” My sister said not to go into the room, but I knew I had to do what I was told.... I couldn’t tell anybody then what happened. Who would believe fightin’ Kenny? But it has never left me, to this day.

I suppose at some point I might have said, "The world is poor, there's a lot of hurt. Happiness is inwards, not outwards. Unless of course you're talkin' about birds. Birds chirp, nobody tells them to, they're just happy".... No, I would never have thought I could be happy. Kenny always hurt. I remember trying to tell people what it [the sexual abuse] was or how it hurt. I didn't have words for it, I couldn't tell anybody. I think I got so frustrated that I got spanked, by my mom. And some other abusive stuff, with her.... I adored my father, but I don't think he ever knew I existed. He was an alcoholic, he lived in another world. I don't recall him ever coming home without alcohol on his breath. The only times he ever played with me was when he was drunk and so he wasn't really there. I recall trying to tell him and his friend what was hurting me. And I got smacked for it, ‘cause I couldn't tell him what hurt me. He didn't understand, and I didn't have words to tell him. And that hurt me even more.

I guess I'm a person from the past. To this day, whenever I hear the song, "Mockingbird Hill" that I first heard in 1951 in Jackfish, I sob [with happiness]. Immediately I am young, I am refreshed, my senses are just tingling with this beautiful sound. When it's over, the daily drudgery goes on. But for a moment I'm almost ecstatic. I get this sometimes from poetry, like Robert Frost.

Yeh, it is surprising that I would talk like this. There has never been another time that I could talk like this and have someone experience the sound, the smell.... No, I could never be a poet. Poets can speak from the heart. I have a hard time doing that. I'm getting better at it, but there are very few people I can do it with. If I ever do it even a little bit, I suppose I surprise people--like people at work.

Did people care? That's a hard one. People care only about certain things. People give to the needy. People say they care. But how can they watch such things happen and not do anything? This one day I went to school, I don't know what I was thinking. I had a nice old lady teacher, Mrs. Thompson. Her husband had died. Teaching was really a vocation for her. And I said to her one day in a quieter moment, something to the effect of she was the mother I wished I had. And she gushed forth with, "What a nice thing to say". And all I saw after that was just pain in her eyes: "Why would a boy say that to me?" I think she understood something of what I was feeling, but didn't want to get wrapped up in it enough to ask questions. I probably would have told her, but she never asked, and that's the way it stayed. After that I had no way of dealing with emotions.

Things were going from bad to worse at home. I was working for this delivery company. I knew I had to go. I came in one day and quit. My boss was Arthur Potter; a fat little gentleman, nice and everything. He called me in and asked why I wanted to quit when I was doing so well. I guess he was the closest one I came to telling about my inside emotions. He said if I couldn't tell him, perhaps I could tell the priest. I said I'd tried that before.

Jennifer [eldest daughter] trusted me like no one ever had. She trusted me to do or be or take anything I wished. Even though she wouldn't understand, she would do it.... [Pauses to regain composure]. Without being in love, without seeing your love die, this was the most and closest that anyone ever got to me.

It was never her fault. She was coming to me on her terms, completely innocent, completely trusting. I wasn't treating her fairly or even meeting her half way. I knew I had nothing to fear from her, so I couldn't say that I couldn't let the emotions come out. I was scared.... I thought, people [adults] can't be like that, completely open. People just aren't like that. She'd seen nothing of life, and yet she saw more in me than I saw in myself. I'd never experienced this kind of caring or affection. Boys didn't kiss their moms, or their dads. I kissed my Dad once and got belted. I didn't really know what love was.... No, let me be clear on that--it wasn't *love* with Jennifer. I thought at the time it was love, but it was lust. It was ***sexual abuse***, like my uncle did to me. It was like me and my dad, nothing intimate: I adored him, came to him, and never got anything back.

No, I never abused Maria. She's following her glands right now, not her brain. I cried the day she left. So fast, so sudden, with this guy she thinks she's in love with. She was crying too and said, "I didn't want to see you like this. I want you to be happy." *It* came up in my throat, and that was it, I couldn't talk no more. If you make this thing come up into my throat to the point where I can't talk no more, that's it. You could be a nice friend and all, but I'd just get up and walk out. Ever since New Ways, I've had to try to stop doing that.

I don't like that word, "survivor." You're living, that's all. You're not living your life, you're just alive. My body survives, lives. But my body isn't happy, it's not really living. You exist in time, that's all. I guess you know about my diabetes.... I've considered it [suicide], yes. I had to fight for a long time with that one. I had to promise Jean, too, that I wouldn't. And I'll keep my promise.

How do I feel about that? [Pauses]. You're pressing for that answer, aren't you. It's something like being an automaton, going through the functions rather than living through the day.... How has that affected me? I used to buy enough alcohol and just go into oblivion. Now I just can't tolerate alcohol at all.

I have *no* relationships at work, none. At work it's fast and furious. Production.... I get a lot of respect from the other people for what I do. I'm in Quality Control. I spend my whole day testing the stuff off the line. I say "yes" or "no" to a whole batch. There's no ambiguity, no compromise--if it doesn't measure up, it goes. It's strictly business.... The only thing I would go to is a golf tourney. These guys are acquaintances. If they were any more friendly they wouldn't be friends. The friendliness becomes responsibility--to do and care for and be aware of.... To be a friend you would have to give more of yourself, question your own being.

A closer friend? A guy? No. [Recoils a bit. Lapses into silence].

[Laughs nervously]. It makes me wonder what's wrong with your head when you ask a question like that. I don't understand you asking that question. [Pauses]. It's just a strange question. It makes me think you have an ulterior motive for asking it. It could be sheer friendship, or I have something I have that you want, or.... If it were something scientific or love for a subject, it would be safe. I get into a quandry there. Say, if you befriended me and we had a relationship. I don't know the boundaries of our relationship. I do get carried away, like in sports. I'm a kid again, with no fences. But my body can't keep up any more.... It gets all mixed up.

When we're out, Jean is the wallflower. I can talk to anyone about anything as long as it's not emotional. I can be the life of the party in 10 minutes. But to find someone only wanted "good-time Ken" along--that's usury. If I tell George I don't want to go to the Trappers game, is that me shunning him or him using me, or what? It's happened so many times. Jean *needs* people. I don't, though I sometimes need to be around people.

I'm kind of back where I was. I haven't come to terms with it. I'm not talking about the abuse stuff, but me in my life, me in my body. Like I had the heart attack, last year. I was gung ho on exercise and all that, for awhile. One day I asked myself, why? I haven't retired from life, but I'm close to it. If I don't feel like doing something, I don't do it. Oh, in some ways I've changed a lot. Jean and I have changed in our relationship a lot in the last few years.

In grade 12 I studied up so I was able to write the grade 13 exams, which I passed. My Dad asked me one day what I wanted to do. I said I wanted to go to university. He said he'd make me a proposition: "I'll send you to school, but a lot of people in the family will have to do without." My first instinct was to be angry. Within about 15 seconds I said, "No, don't bother".... I guess the drive is gone out of me now. I just don't have it, even though I think studying engineering to me would be simple.

I try not to think about the future.... I guess maybe I can't change it. Maybe I can try, I don't know. Each man is his own mover. You know the old adage, "let sleeping dogs lie." But no, they don't sleep, it's just that I don't always want to move on them. If it makes me richer, will I do it? Not necessarily. Will it make me younger if I do it? Likely not. Will I have acclaim, fame?

The methodology [at New Ways Offender Program] was just too fast for me. It had to be OK with me before I could tell somebody.... I opened up long enough and started down the long stairs, in the darkness. I thought one of the therapists would be there with me. But as I went down into memory, the therapist was further and further behind me.... One of the things that still amazes me is why would a therapist allow their emotions to be taken for a walk by someone else. It's so hard for me to get *my* inside out. How do they stay with you?

If I had really allowed myself to feel empathy for Jennifer or Jean, I'd hate myself *so* much I'd have to take action [suicide].... I didn't stay with the treatment program, but I didn't try to beat it either. After I chose to go from there back to prison, I learned a lot in the library. I couldn't convince them I wanted to help my*self*. But I did. Something Carl Rogers said clicked. I don't *need to* shut down anymore. You can get hurt, or hurt something else [in relationships]. I keep telling myself I have to keep opening up that wall. And I guess I do. *But I can control it on a dime.*

Essaying the conversation.

When I approach Ken to see if he would share his experiences with me, he is quite willing and even eager to participate. He has sexually abused his daughter and as a consequence has gone through a prison term and a lengthy therapy process. Agreeing to the conversation and its publication may represent part of his own healing process, and a way of contributing to others; perhaps even a sense of atoning for his actions.

We meet in my study. Ken seems "up" for the experience. I am surprised by how quickly and willingly he volunteers the story about his early life. I would not want my reader to think that he expresses this glibly or without feeling, for he is obviously very present, but he is able to articulate events and feelings with remarkable clarity. As I am later to discover, it is not this, or even his abuse of his daughter, that seems most "tender" for him; but rather his relationships with other men. In one tense moment when I push him to comment on his relationships with men, my fantasy is that he will either get physically aggressive or get up and leave. He does neither. He makes it clear that when "it"--that is, any feeling that is too powerful for words comes up in his throat--that is the end of the conversation. He does not end the conversation this time, though I am sure that a part of him would like to. It is a striking commentary on a moment of fear, of homophobia in the raw. The implicitness of the homosocial bond breaks down, ever so fleetingly.

There is an intriguing tension in Ken's words and silences. Yes, he can "control it on a dime," and I am under no illusion that he does not control our conversation to the extent that he can. The conventional wisdom would be that such interpersonal control is typical "offender behavior." But he has also been a "victim." One of the dilemmas in therapeutic work is the tension between discourses of victimization, discourses of violent behavior. Ken's story is of one of being violated and feeling like a victim, and of becoming the violator. He walks a binary line, neither side of which qualifies him unconditionally for the old order of "intimate citizenship." We find ourselves with a dilemma. Some would apply a "cycle of violence" model to reconcile the two; based on the premise that violaters have almost always been violated earlier in life. The matter is unlikely to be so simple. My point, though, is neither to judge nor exonerate Ken, but to get his help in understanding something of intimate relation. Control is a central theme for him, if not for many men. Control can certainly be about violation. We may easily miss its relevance in intimacy, for it seems antithetical to connection. And yet, Ken can only find some sense and measure of intimacy with family when he feels a measure of control over his exposure of pain and vulnerability. He must row his own boat, in Weingarten's terms.

Ken's unconscious is very close to the surface when he speaks of "it" coming up his throat, of matters of his body. His framings of interpersonal boundary and "body" are intriguing and insightful. Boundaries between self and other are an obvious issue in discourses of violation and abuse, and in discourses of intimacy. In abuse, important interpersonal and intergenerational boundaries are confused and transgressed. It is no accident that Ken speaks of the confusion of "lust" and "abuse" with "intimacy." I am reminded of Levinas' (1989) work when Ken says he would not want to get closer because to get close is to have to take on responsibility for care of the Other. He is quite right, for to face a person is to take on their burdens. I feel such a burden here, for I have faced Ken. I am burdened with wanting to see him join the world, knowing that the world does not necessarily want him, and knowing that he is afraid.

Ken seems not to see how he could be the one-cared-for in an intimate relation. He wants to be heard and believed and affirmed by others in his life. But the residue of very violations that he has experienced--and we can see that it is a poignant residue indeed--becomes the barrier, the almost impermeable boundary that subverts intimacy. It is the male injunction against vulnerability writ large. I am struck by all of his contradictions in his seemingly baring his soul to me, and yet suddenly setting boundaries. When he says he wonders what's wrong with my head, I'm afraid I've lost him. What is intriguing is the contradiction between his ability to articulate, and yet his persistent inability to live out in more intimate ways, the boundaries between himself and Other. It is the crossing of boundaries, for example the parent-child boundary between he and his daughter, that represents and reminds him of the violation of his own body/self. He expresses in quite a startling and remarkable way his apprehension about not knowing when to stop: "I'm a kid again, with no fences. [My body] gets all mixed up." His body is not of him, not for him. And so, he does not take the risk of befriending other men. He expresses, in a way that is easy enough to understand when we know of his history, what many men express non-verbally. What do such notions about *boundaries* tell us about intimacy?

The "old" Ken would have used his formidable intellect to control his wife, his children, his therapists, his workmates (He probably still does). The control might be active, in terms of calculated verbal abuse. The more powerful form of control would be his withdrawal, silence, keeping them guessing. He would often put on his headphones and retreat into his music for long periods of time. He would often withdraw into alcohol. It would be easy enough to miss the old Ken's vulnerability. But it is this vulnerability he seems to be sharing with me. What is it he fears most: what he might show to others, or what he might have to see himself? Ken represents a manhood that we love to hate: a sexual deviant, an outcast. While many would claim--and quite rightly--that we are a patriarchal and violent society that tolerates and even overlooks the oppression of women, children, gays, elders, and minorities of all kinds; we still reserve some of our strongest condemnation for a man convicted of the sexual violation of his children. Ken represents the man who takes violation too far for us to ignore.

My goal with Ken is neither a therapeutic one nor an interrogative one, much as I could imagine myself slipping into either one at many points in our conversation. To do so would not only be counterproductive in terms of my research agenda, but it would be an abuse of power and privilege on my part. Nor is my goal to convince my reader that Ken is a perfect human being. I simply want to hear him, and to have my reader hear him, with all possible empathy as a man who has struggled mightily with intimacy and power issues every day of his life. His body has always been a literal and metaphorical war zone for his emotional issues. I am astonished at his ability and willingness to tell me of his poetic sensibilities.

Ken first describes his relationship with his oldest daughter, even at the time of his abuse of her, in terms of "intimacy": No one, he says, has ever gotten so close to him or trusted him as she does. He then stops himself and very clearly says that there is "nothing intimate" about it (it is his therapy speaking). I am reminded of Lacan's definition of love: "The subject gives to the other what he or she does not have" (cited in Salecl, 1994, p. 15). The sexual abuse may represent, albeit *in a most convoluted and terribly hurtful way*, the torturer's "inscribing of his truth" on the body of his victim. But the relief of his phallic burden (not the burden of "hardwired sexual urges" that many abusers will claim) is never more than fleeting and fragmentary. If there is anything intimate about incest, it is a terrible intimacy indeed. If there is anything that *appears* intimate about any form of violation of one family member by another more powerful one, it is perhaps captured by the notion of *traumatic bonding* that is such a familiar theme in violence discourses. The violator and the violated are frozen, like the deer caught in the headlights. We who could "know" but choose not to are also frozen. Let me be clear, though: we cannot condone or in any way minimize the trauma of abuse for its victim, the perpetrator's responsibility for that trauma, our collective responsibility to see and act..

Does Ken "control it on a dime"? Undoubtedly so. Once again, we hear a story of failed fatherhood (and failed motherhood). It seems that Ken does not, as Ron does, find an occupation that could help him to sort it all out for himself. This lonely man gives us a gift of himself that he shares rarely with anyone. If such sharing is rare, is it because such sharing is too risky for him, or is it that such talk is taboo within the world he inhabits, or is it that no one really wants to hear from such a man? I am touched to the core by the images of the little boy, the adolescent, the man in middle-age who never completely gives up in the struggle to tell someone of his pain and his need.

Wilf, 53, Teacher

"If you're too involved, you can't see."

It's very hard to say what has guided your life, because what you think guided your life may not be what actually did. You and I already talked about WWII and Nazism, and I think that has influenced me more than anything else. I was born in Germany just after the war started.... I do remember certain things, like bombing raids, and people being scared.... But as a kid in the village, only about four times a year did the war actually impact on us. Until closer to the end. As a child you don't understand those things. One thing that probably impacted me, though I didn't think about it at the time, was that there were no men around. All of the men were soldiers. The grandfather was the only male figure. At the time I didn't worry about it. Everyone else's dad wasn't there either. After the war when I started school, out of a class of 48, there were only 6 or 7 that had their dads. *The others were all dead....* When my Dad's unit retreated, they were in Yugoslavia and decided to give themselves up. There was no one to give themselves up to, so he didn't get home 'til '48.

I never did feel that I knew my Dad. I probably got to know an uncle better as a male figure.... There was a stigma against the military, a propaganda against soldiers. The youth especially was very anti-war, though everyone felt it. After a lost war, the men who came back were disgusted. They'd lost everything, the best years of their lives--and for what? As a young man I'm sure that what alienated me from my Dad was not just his being away for so long but the fact that he was a soldier. He was the guilty one. I now realize how awful it must have been for him.

Just to show you that I never talked to him even after the war, I had no idea for a long time what he was doing; whether he was at the top or at the bottom of the company he worked for.... He is still alive. He had a stroke in '83 that left him paralysed. It was really only then that I got to know him a little bit. I went over to Germany for two weeks and spent the time just with him.

I emigrated when I was 24. I was in university studying English and geography. I got to travel a lot. The group that I was with, we tried to show by travelling that Germans were not all bloodthirsty and stuff like that. I got a chance to go to the States, and Canada. Then I met Kathleen and we had to decide whether we would go to Germany and live there or stay in to Canada. She didn't know any German at that time.

I married into a rather high-profile Canadian family. It wasn't hard to adjust. Socially, yes, but not job-wise. They needed teachers here badly, so I had a job, just like that. I was in a school with four other teachers in Thompson. The teachers were awful. But I think it was the best experience that I've had, looking back. That one year formed me the most. It was good because I had to do everything on my own. Nobody knew Kathleen or her family there. She made twice the money I did!

Except for the year in Thompson, I just took over Kathleen's friends. I liked them and many of them were very good to me. I didn't really have to work at it. Otherwise it would be very hard as an adult to make friends. It was hard enough getting to know Kathleen. I'd only known her for three weeks when we got married! That year in Thompson we had to get to know ourselves and each other. It was harder for her than for me. Culturally, Europeans are a lot more argumentative.... We would talk about things and we would fight and she would start crying. I couldn't handle that. I found it very hard in Canada to talk to people. I didn't think people talked about anything, anything I was interested in anyway. Culturally speaking, to me it was a wasteland . . . . We moved to Yellowknife and three years later, the children started arriving. We had four children in six years. There was no time to think! *We* made friends which we have to this day.

As far as feeling at ease, I still get along better with people who are non-Canadian. Maybe it's a matter of style of relating. I feel it's boundaries. I don't think in Canada people have boundaries. In Canada, everyone is a "friend"--it's in the language. I find it insincere and superficial. There are so many people in Europe that there have to be boundaries. I don't have problems. I set up boundaries and people know! I do it quite unconsciously. For instance, when a woman "comes on" to me, I don't even notice it. When I do feel a bit uncomfortable, I let the person know. For example, many people assume that because I'm German I must think Hitler was OK. They make stupid jokes. I say I don't find that funny, and that's the end of it.... I still like the European way of addressing people, the "vous and the tu." Linguistically it's clear. I allow people to get close to me by offering the "du." I find it terrible that a sales clerk calls me Wilf. I call my neighbors by last name, always.

I find sometimes I can be closer, more understanding in a way, of someone I keep at bay than someone I'm a buddy with. To say you're close with someone is just your perception, and it may not be so. Why should I tell people something about myself like, say, uh, "when I get embarrassed I stutter"--if that has nothing to do with the task, for example, of planning curriculum? If I feel it will improve something, I'll share it. It depends on the atmosphere in the group as well. Trust, I guess. Trust to me doesn't necessarily mean that a relationship will go further or less far. I can trust you with an aspect of my life without the relationship necessarily going further. But I think trust is important.

I've never thought about my "style" in relationships, I must say. I'm quite content, though I do often still feel like an outsider. As an immigrant you're always sitting between two cultures. People here tell you that, "you wouldn't understand." In the culture you came from, they say, "you're not like us anymore." The opposite side of that is, you should criticize both sides, because you know both sides better than anybody else. You have to have some distance from whatever you criticize. If you're too involved, you can't see....

I do measure myself against something, but it's more a structure I've created myself, a standard. The standard is still evolving and changing. For instance, money is not something I measure against....

I ask myself sometimes whether I live in the past. I never dwell on the past, especially in "I should have done this." What I do dwell on is, how did I do it and what did it lead to.... I think I'm living more for the future.... I don't look at the future a long way ahead, like the future of the world--more like the next 25 years. Now that I'm getting older, I think more like I'll be dying soon. Kathleen's sister just died, and my mother, and they weren't that old. And you think, what are you leaving behind you, besides your children. Our family just got together and we said we should do a little bit more as a family. We don't have that much time any more. Karen and her husband are leaving for New Brunswick and we don't know when they will be back. It's a practical thing.

I do use the past to explain things. Like having a dad who came back late, even if I don't have much in common with him, is better than having no dad. That's the way it was. It's only now looking back, and having read about the "absent father," that I think maybe there is something. My mother said she didn't want people to say we grew up without a father. She meant, "not disciplined." She was pretty tough, like she played a father role--more a father than a father in fact. During the war, spanking with a switch was "in".... As for death, compared to other people who went through the war, I had a very easy time. I didn't see anybody die. Nobody in my family died. I look back on childhood as free and unencumbered, in the village. We could do whatever we wanted to .

No, I never tell my children stories. Kathleen tells them a lot better, anyway. They're a lot more interesting and a lot less true than when I tell them.... For me it's very important to get it right--otherwise you make your own history. I like to stick closely to the truth. I think there still is a truth. Kathleen's truth is not my truth.... What *really* happened is the most important thing to me. She told the kids that my Dad walked home to our village from Yugoslavia after the war. It's not true.

Having things predictable has nothing to do with truth. But I don't think you can do anything unless you start out with the facts. People just make up their own thing and sell it as another kind of truth. To me it's not even truth.... In order to feel a certain way, you have to know a lot. When I say "I feel" something, it's based on all kinds of research. I *never* trust what Canadians call "gut feeling." I always verify it--maybe 50% is correct and 50% is wrong. Intuition to me is also something very weird. It's different because it's something you do unconsciously but based on facts. If you want it to be real, it's real. There is no doubt that I would trust my thinking process more....

As a matter of fact I can get quite intimate or close to a person when we're working on a common task, doing the same thing together.... They are different things. One is personal, but that has nothing to do with reality. For instance, writing stories is a personal thing that is just my interpretation. It is a different part of my life altogether. I have to use my reason to see whether it fits with reality.

Being close.... With Mother's death I realized that, especially with being so far away, saying goodbye and dying are always very close.... It's different with my father. I've never felt really close to him. If he dies now, it would be OK. I went through the whole process in '83. It's a different kind of closeness now.

Essaying the conversation.

I know Wilf first through Kathleen, which is interesting in light of his sense of "borrowed" intimacy in Canada. In a sense, perhaps I borrow something of his good will. Kathleen and the children (now all adults) would probably describe him in terms of his sensitivity, kindness, generosity, sentimentality, and his strengths as a loving husband and father. Their many friends would probably describe him in very warm terms. His students would probably describe him as a dedicated and caring teacher. Though Wilf and I are far from strangers, the formality and distance he speaks of is clearly evident as an underlying dynamic in our conversation. Were Kathleen also present we would perhaps be more at ease; not so much because she and I are closer, but because her presence as a woman would be apt to defuse a certain discomfort between us as men.

Wilf might say that we are intimate at this moment by virtue of what we are sharing of this research task. For me, it is a bit of a tension--a wanting something more, perhaps. At times during the conversation I have to struggle to contain my need to react to his containment of feelings; particularly around issues such as his relationship with his father, death. For me, coming from a different cultural context, there are some "shoulds" that it would be unfair to impose on him. I do not mean to suggest here that he is cold, or even markedly different from other men. He is simply very articulate about his boundaries and what he finds acceptable. Paradoxically, perhaps, he (like Ken) feels more comfortable and more open to the possibility of intimacy, when he is able to keep someone "at bay." He does not see that as a negative thing at all.

For Wilf, there may be no particular problematic in our conversation other than this bizarre constructivist view of mine. We have briefly discussed the idea of narrative (constructed) truth previously in another less "intimate" context. I am intrigued by the way he expresses his views on that issue. For him, narratives are alright as an amusement or diversion, but they should never be confused with *reality*. Getting too close to the scene would prevent us from seeing reality accurately. What Canadians call "gut feelings" are not to be trusted. Clearly, these things are of more than academic interest and importance to him. They are guides to his life. And yet he relies heavily on the relationships linked to his wife's frankly open and intuitive way of being. If it were not for her "place" in his intimate relationships, would he be different? As I say to him, I have never before heard such a clear statement on empiricism and truth; these powerful icons of manhood. It is startling to me in part because I often tend to see such a position as disembodied and lacking in feeling. *Wilf is anything but unfeeling, anything but disembodied.* He would not approve of my looking for the unsaid or unsayable in our conversation--he would want me to accept that what I see is what I get.

It is striking that the models of manhood held out to Wilf as he is growing up are shadow ones: the failed/shamed soldier, the absent father, the grandfather who is too old to fight. The soldiers in particular are not only not to be emulated-- they are to be actively devalued by the youth of the post-war era. Wilf only hints at whatever questions he may have about that. He does not tell me that he is sad about it, or angry. He strikes me as a man quite satisfied with his life and his contributions, but a man concerned, as any man, with his mortality.

What does Wilf say about *intimacy*? He still feels an "outsider" in Canadian society. It is important to him that he be able to have control of the degree of intimacy in a relationship; that he be able to keep the other person at bay if he chooses. He says this would be much easier to do linguistically in Europe than it is in this over-familiar society. The question of *boundaries* arises yet again. Wilf struggles to maintain his privacy and sense of self in relation in this borrowed culture and borrowed friends. Is there one "true" intimacy? Would such an intimacy mean not having boundaries, having inflexible and immovable boundaries? Is there a universal "intimacy"? In the end, I have to conclude that he and I experience intimacy for this short time. For my part, I know it because I take him with me; I think about him often and wonder how things are going for him. I wonder how he is doing in his new home, what he will say about his new grandson.

Robert, 40, Theater director

"There's Something I Won't Settle For."

40 years of stories--it's hard to know where to start. I grew up in a town in B.C. I always think it's kind of spooky that exactly two years before my birth, my mother lost her first baby, my brother, strangled by the cord.... When I was born, my parents lived in the same house they live in now. I think, how many people have that touchstone. What am I gonna do when that place isn't there any more? I actually go back there two or three times a year.... Having lived in this house for 7 years, I realize I'm trying to perpetuate certain things. I guess there's an inbred home inside of us.... It's nothing like my mother's house but it has the feel of my grandmother's house... like the steep stairway there.

My father worked in various aspects of the construction trade. He was a contractor, and owned his own business in partnership with my grandfather for a long time. All I remember was that my dad was a hard working man, and my grandfather who lived with us through my adolescence was also a hard-working, honest and well-respected man. We never had any money. They finally decided to sell the business and my dad went to work for a big company.

The pressure from my father onto me was to *not* be anything like him. Every so often he'd call himself stupid or bash himself about a decision he'd made. It's taken me a long time to realize what a low self-image he has. The only thing he was adamant about with me was that I would go to university because neither he nor my mother had gotten past grade 12. He didn't appear to care *what* I did at university. I don't remember any long discussions with him about principles or ethics, esoteric or practical.

My mother is very quick to judge, but she has this huge heart and is very giving. She enjoys volunteer work.... I guess she was always the one to create the fun in our family.... She wanted me to be a money machine, a lawyer.... They'd struggled a lot through their lives. She was determined that I'd use my high academic aptitude to "do well": to look after myself, or to look after them, or to give them something to talk about. Later when I got this part-time appointment teaching at the university, that seemed much more important than my full-time job.

I grew up in the Anglican Church. I used to go 'cause I thought it was interesting. I know a lot of my ideas were shaped by some kind of Christian thing. I had a very strong relationship with a

YMCA summer camp that I went to from age 12 to 22--as a camper, counsellor, and finally program director.... This place was really important to me. A lot of my spiritual upbringing comes from that connection to both natural things and connection to people and, I don't know, a sense of living communally and stuff like that. Anyway, I was intent that as long as I could, I would continue to go there. My mother worked at MacBlo. She said she could get me a job there at $4.50 an hour after my second year. I said I couldn't, I'd be working at camp. She said I had to.... I ended up pitting them against each other. My last word was, "If you don't give me the money, I'll take the year off."

I played hockey when I was eight, nine, and ten. I had a nice coach who played everybody whether you were good or bad. I actually scored a goal that year--I almost fainted from excitement. My mother always went to the games on Saturday mornings and cheered. My dad was trying to make this business work and he never came to the games. I remember once pleading with him to please come to the game. He said he'd really try and he never got there. I know that's always stuck with me and I know now that there was no sense of malice on his part. He was just scrambling, he was always scrambling.... When I was in public school he would often take the truck down to Toronto for supplies. Sometimes he'd ask me to go with him and sometimes I'd go and that would be our major bonding for the year. I remember one time he asked if I wanted to go and I said no, I didn't, and I remember just seeing him all by himself driving away and I felt really terrible. As I look back, there was a sense of a solitary individual trying to do something with his son and his son not being very responsive.

I was in grade 12 and I had a friend who I realize now I was probably in love with. This friend was one of the first people I'd ever met who seemed to be really interested in me as a person.... I worked in a clothing store. There wasn't much business, so I used to sit for hours on a Saturday, and this friend would come in and talk about what he noticed about me. By the time his family moved to Regina, we'd become very close. I was *really* despondent. I decided I needed to go and visit him. I thought I could hitchhike, in the middle of January! I decided that I couldn't just run away, so I sat down to talk with my father. It was the first intimate conversation I'd ever had with my father. I told him that I really missed this friend and that I really wanted to go visit him and spend a week with him. The thing that was great was that he told me things about him as a human being. He said that when he first came back from overseas after the war, he asked my mom to marry him. She said she didn't know, didn't seem to be able to make up her mind. He thought, it doesn't matter to me any more, so he said, "Either you say yes and we get married, or you say no and I'm going someplace" Obviously our conversation was a pretty important event. I took him into my confidence in a way I never had, and he took me into his.

A lot of things happened that year. I remember my father coming into my room, in the spring. After some kind of preamble, he said, "I just wanted you to know that if you don't want to go to university, you don't have to." Of course I had no other plans, but that was a really important moment.... *We weren't close, but we weren't not close*. He just always seemed so busy.

I think I probably found out later in life that he had a strength and a fortitude that kept him going through all of those really difficult times where he really didn't know where to turn in terms of finances. But he's a fairly soft person. He has the same kind of temper I do... suppress, suppress, suppress and then the lid blows off at some point and everybody says, "Ooh, where did that come from"! There was a bully in our neighborhood, and my dad said he had had the same problem and that the one time he stood up to the bully, he never bothered him again. I thought oh, sure, fine for you, but one day when Kenny Costa pushed me down into a puddle, I got up and popped him in the nose and he never bothered me again . . . .

There was kind of a bonding thing between my Dad and me. He never came to the hockey games but there was another way that when I was older we did these musicals in high school. The scores for these Broadway musicals were always pretty difficult and the music teacher asked other people in the community to supplement the school musicians. My dad actually came and played in the pit orchestra for three or four of my shows. That was a way for us to connect. He was also the one to take me to piano lessons.... I've often felt that he dealt with his own artistic leanings through me vicariously.

I had my first man teacher in grade five. He was probably 20 years old, a hockey player in a hockey town. He was pretty exciting, energetic. I was one of the kids he kept in his class for grade six, in my case because he couldn't teach music. So I taught the class the songs. Here I was, *useful* to a man I really admired and respected, an athlete. And I had something he needed: my musical ability. In high school there were a couple of people. One was an older man who taught English and had just come back from a stint in Botswana. He kind of made English come alive. When we talked about Hotspur he seemed like a real person. I remember *An Ode to a Fat Lady in White Gloves* [quotes a few lines]. And then we had a math teacher who ran the chorus for the

Show of the Year club. He was kind of a looney tune, had a plate in his head, used to put his foot in garbage cans and stuff. But he was one of the nicest most generous human beings ever.

I probably really divorced my parents when I was in grade 10 or 11. In fact I became really independent and independent-minded. When I was in school I was kind of a big cheese and took on a lot of leadership roles and became president of the student council and stuff like that. I stopped going on family holidays. I seemed to have my own mission and it was different; we kind of went on different paths.... I don't know what really split me off from them other than I felt we were all living our separate lives anyway and I was about to develop my own. The first leaving home was when I went 70 miles away to university. The real leaving home came three or four years later when *they* decided I wasn't coming back and painted my room. It was a shock, and a really ugly color to boot!

I met my first gay male mentor in University, someone who's become probably my best friend. I'd come from a fairly conservative home. The first time I met this outrageous creature I didn't know what to think. Here I was, this fresh faced boy from a small town. He is and was a costume designer.... What he ended up teaching me was a whole other world, a whole aesthetic of the theater, food, sexuality. Probably the development of my friendship with Warren has been a really important thing for me. I realized when I spent some time with him last Christmas that I've known him half my life. Staggering!

I was pretty ambivalent about sexuality then 'cause I hadn't put the word to it yet. It took me until I was 23 to finally say, "I am gay." By then I was comfortable with it. I guess I'd known since I was 16.... All my romantic fantasies were about girls, my sexual fantasies were about men, boys probably. All the gay men I'd met were much older than I.

I don't remember a lot of messages about being a man. The strongest message I remember was in high school. I had a girlfriend. My mother was obsessed with warning me about pregnancy.... I don't remember any questions about marriage. That was probably more freeing than anything. Both of my parents--it kind of defines our relationship--don't ask me about my personal life. Sexuality isn't part of our vocabulary together. A tacit respect or a tacit fear; probably more fear than respect. Probably they don't want to know.... There's a whole push in gay culture today to come out. That's just not them.

When I finally put my sexuality in some kind of a context, I was in a relationship with somebody who was absolutely everything I'd ever imagined. It was like a dream come true, but only on a physical level. There was a kind of desperate feel about the older gay men I had met. When I was telling you about not being able to get the romantic and sexual fantasies together--well with Maurice I thought I had. The problem was the romantic fantasies had no basis in reality. It [when we moved in together] was the worst 6 months of my life.

As a result of those three relationships, *I realize there's something that I won't settle for.* That's the thing that keeps me going. It's that realization that keeps me positive. I used to feel a sense of desperation when I wasn't in a relationship. Maybe it's a factor of age and wisdom, but I don't feel that sense of desperation anymore. A bad relationship isn't better than no relationship. A big thing in my professional life is to be available for surprises. That's what I'm trying to look at in my personal life now. I'm willing now to really make a commitment, to work hard at a relationship. By hard work I mean the grappling with what you need from the other person. I am, in my professional life, inclined to be a facilitator; so I'm not inclined to ask for what I need. I have to learn to say what I need and know what the other person needs.... My mother can't do that. Maybe that's what makes her crabby: a Christ complex. like "I'll do good until I'm crucified."

Relationship is a problem; I certainly feel it as a problem. My fear is becoming the 60 year old who's ogling the 20 year olds. It's bad enough being the 40 year old.... For gay men the physical thing is very important. It becomes a tyrrany, but one that's more self-imposed (for women it's probably more societal). I hope the plague (AIDS) will change all that. I joined the Community Church last year to find a way back in to the gay community. It's lifestyle-based, but it's also based on spirituality. It's nice to get involved with people who are interested in more than dancing and drinking.

I guess part of what I'm trying to deal with in my own life is what I mean by partnership, 'cause that's the word I've been using in terms of how I'd like to deal with another person on an intimate basis in my life. I guess I don't really know yet. I'm starting to know what it isn't. Intimacy goes beyond the physical thing, though that's important. Intimacy is about getting inside each other, allowing for secrets and wishes and hopes to be shared.... It's a kind of exclusivity--you're the person I come back to and need at the end of the day.... You grow into it, but you're aware of how it grows and changes.

It's a risk to be close because you could suddenly not be close. A public statement of your commitment to another person is important. Taking that next step ceases to be playing house together or being boyfriends together. It takes a spiritual and emotional and intellectual decision together; in front of friends, and God I guess.

I'm interested in the men's movement, yes, but we need to explore how two *men* create a relationship together. We can't use our parents' relationships as models. They're not very good models to start with, and they're about men and women. Two men can't just say, you do the cooking and I'll fix the fence. There's a whole new area of work to be done.

I remember my Dad writing me a note a few years ago that really touched me. He said "I don't know if I've really said as much to you, but I'm really proud of you." I think it's the chance to see his own offspring doing things he wishes he'd done. There's a certain pride in that: "I didn't do that but Bob is doing it." He's proud of that, that somewhere in the upbringing all those things were put in place.

Essaying the conversation.

Robert and I meet in a comfortable and "intimate" corner of his little two-storey house in an older neighborhood. I tell him briefly about my study, my interest in hearing stories about the people and events that have guided his life as a man. He seems very comfortable. I find that I have to say very little; at no point do I feel a tension or difficulty with the issues.

Robert says of he and his father, "we weren't close, but we weren't not close." It is not a relation of conflict or tension, or even of distance perhaps, but a relation both wish could be something more. His father seems to say, "Don't be like me." I wonder, and Robert wonders, if he is really saying, "Be what I really want to be, what I could be if. Be my stand-in, my proxy." Our children often take our boundaries, the boundaries they come to know so well whether they are ever spoken or not, and run with them. What are Robert's father's boundaries, what holds him back? It is hard to get a clear sense of this kindly and hard-working man from Robert's account. What does he desire in life that eludes him--it is surely much more than material security.

We are not surprised that it is much easier to get a sense for Robert's mother. Her frustration with her station is palpable: her struggle with the boundaries of what a woman of her time can do and aspire to, her frustrated desires, her frustration at being thrust into the role of emotional center in her relationship with her husband, her frustration with the seeming unwillingness or inability of her husband to be strong in her terms. Her reluctance to consent to marriage may indicate that in some sense have she foresees the issues. I guess on all of these matters, perhaps unfairly. Robert speaks more of his father, perhaps because I somehow convey my interest in that relation. I have so far said little of mothers' places in the lives of men and boys. But clearly his mother is a most important figure in his life, as are mothers in most men's lives. I am reminded here of Sedgewick's work on the homosocial bond. Even within the family, cradle of intimacy, the distance between men/boys must be just right--and mediated by Woman.

It is interesting on several accounts that Robert would find himself working in theater. Among other things, theater is about human relation, connection, alienation, violation. It is his job as director to elicit from his performers--guided of course by the boundaries of the script--the most authentic performance of feeling and action of their characters. Robert, like Ron, orchestrates and mediates "intimacy" and its representation in his work. It must take great discipline on the part of the director and the actors to develop the personae and the gestalt that the audience can identify with. As audience, we learn about ourselves despite ourselves. Theater is bigger than life, and yet in our minds it comes to real life. Can we say, then, that Robert is intimate with his actors and his audience in this process, that this intimacy "moves" and co-creates? I think so.

But such big-picture intimacy, no matter how engaging, is probably never enough. Robert searches for the right person to come home to at the end of the day. His parents' relationship is not one he can or wishes to emulate or "settle for." A sexual relationship is not enough. Why would it be, why would we assume it would be? It is one of the first sorts of assumption homophobic society makes about a gay relationship--it is the physical/sexual that seems to frighten heterosexual man most. Today it may be, on jagodzinski's (1998) account, the "perversity and sexual enjoyment" (p. 2), the coming out of the closet of diverse sexualities (no longer defined by the notion of the "feminized man"), that is so troublesome to the Oedipal Father (the political Right). His sons, after all, would not be permitted access to His enjoyments. Robert might want to say that he is not "radical" or "political" in relation to such developments and sexualities.

The familiar and perhaps clichéd dialectical relation of pursuer-distancer that describes so many heterosexual relationships may become particularly problematic in a relation between gay men where the gender rules are different. What if both are distancers? That is perhaps part of a complex of issues that Robert may be alluding to when he says gay men have some unique issues to work out. Who will take out the garbage is an interesting one to contemplate, but hardly the central one. His mentioning it may alert us, though, to the possibility that gay relationships are still often defined in relation to dominant masculinity's icons and terms. The issues become ones of role and relationship: Who will become the emotional core? Who will pursue and broker issues of intimacy as women so often do? Who will remember birthdays. Who will be the keepers of community? Surely, though, they are also poignant issues of Self and identity. Robert is still very much asking himself searching questions about who he is; not from a position of adolescent angst but from a position of mature grounding in life. I can identify with that position all too well.

I think of Robert and his deep sense of spirituality this week when I read an article about a fundamentalist Christian group that is setting out to "help" any gay person who wants to change (become heterosexual). Do we see this as an act of Christian generosity, or yet another incarnation of hegemonic manhood's desperate project to deny difference and the "already-crossedness" of the line; the desperation hidden only slightly by the group's statement that they only want to offer an alternative for those who want to change?

Erik, 19, Salesperson

"It's kind of the rock upon which I build my confusion."

I grew up in Saskatoon mainly. Going way back, my first best friend would be Christy. I was about five and she would be a couple of years older. We played house for a couple of years. I played the dad and a kid. She pretty well told me what to do--I was pretty clueless. I don't remember much about her.

The friend I remember most about would be Robbie Moore--we were friends from grade three on. We were a couple of bad asses running around setting fire to junk occasionally and playing a lot of Monopoly. The teachers were always talking about "little Robbie and Little Eric." Eric got high marks and was motivated, but I was a little spaced, pretty clueless. I was bright and they liked me.... I was no more rebellious than the standard boy thing.

We moved to Edmonton when I was nine or ten. I hated the move. I'd been in a gifted program so I felt better educated, arrogant. So, I started in a new junior high, two years younger than everybody else. I graduated and never expected to see them again, but I find myself hanging out with one of them now.... We reminisced about what a nerd or preppy so and so had been. We would have had everybody slotted. The categories still exist--I just don't encounter people that way anymore. You act like an idiot for a few years, then you grow out of it and start acting like a real human being.

I find it really weird when people who are 50 keep acting like they did when they were 16. One time my friends and I walked into a sports bar without thinking. Yep, jocks still exist, and they still wear team caps. One of these guys took exception to my friend's earrings and "fag scarf," as he called it, so it seemed a good time to exit. They probably say similar things about me and my friends.

I seem to spend most of my free time going to coffee houses with people. Carrying around French philosophers and doing the pseudo-beatnik thing is what everybody's aiming at. I go out drinking with friends--we sit around and talk, always in a group. Usually I meet my close friends John and Justin somewhere, then we join a large group later. It's not as if there are any wild parties or anything.

No, there probably isn't the same pressure to pair off as there was for my parents' generation, though it does still seem more important for girls than for guys. Some women I know will be pining away over not having a boyfriend.... I was "single" for a year and a half-- not seeing anybody exclusively. I've been seeing Barb for a year and a week now.... We go out, often with my friends or hers, do the quiet evening at home thing, walk the dog, play cards. We're always free to do our own things with our own friends.

Sometimes I think about whether our relationship will last a long time, but I'm not going to obsess about it. That's what it looks like right now. I'd be perfectly happy if we'd keep going out, get married *way* down the line, have kids, die together. I don't mind being in a monogamous relationship. I'd want us both to have finished our education and have some semblance of a steady job, do some travelling. We'd be ready to be secure and set up. In the meantime we're planning on living together, not so much that we want to test it out as that we are good roommates.

Marriage [pauses] says you're going to be spending the rest of your life with this person. You're not going to be doing whatever you feel like anymore. You have an obligation, subverting your will for the sake of the other person. Marriage solidifies your commitment not only to the person but to the life you want to live together. That's why I'd want to wait. Money is a big issue. Both of us want and need careers. Was it different for you?....

The good parts: I've learned about commitment. You have to be very accepting of the other person's faults, and realize that you really can't change them. *The value of c-o-m-m-u-n-i-c-a-t-i-o-n!* There is absolutely no use in not telling the other person something. The negative parts: You have to accept a lot of things as if they just never happened. My parents can have the most horrendous fight and every old wound is brought up. None of the issues get resolved. The fight will end, everybody goes to bed, and it's as if nothing ever happened. It may be necessary [for them], but I don't care for that at all.

Everyone I know is an unemployed undergrad. It's annoying, emotionally, not to have the freedom to hop around, or to pursue a straight career path, and to make a fair income from it. There's a feeling of being lied to about staying in school and all of that. Everybody tries, but a lot end up in service industries. We could be angry, of course. Part of it's resignation. I don't see what we could do to change it. Nobody wants to be a right-winger. You're left with the prospect that this is how it's going to be. You have to be practical about it. It pops up in the music and writing: retroangry young man. I don't think young people blame themselves. We all went through school being cynical about that. It might be more true in traditional or blue-collar families. We're *so* overqualified that we *know* this isn't really us.

My Dad is a martyr. Nothing could ever be quite as bad as his situation [to him]. I'm sure my mother feels quite responsible to look after him. So does my sister. I'm not expected to look after him. Perhaps I seem too spaced out, or I'm male.... I know I'm like him in some ways. We're both self-absorbed; but I'm pretty aware of it, I work on it with my friends. I always phone Justin up and whine at him. I'm not sure my Dad is aware.

This stuff with my Dad isn't horrible or anything--it seems more dramatic when I'm on a train of thought talking about it. There are good things. Ya, unlike my mother and sister, I can get away.... I waffle a little. Part of me would really like to talk to him about it. I think I understand him better than they do. But it's not really an option. We don't have conversations, especially about personal experience.... I'd like him to listen a little bit more. I could start talking and he would drift away. I know he feels isolated. He's got me and my sister frozen at about age 13. He can't relate to us as adults.

Maybe I am a little beyond my years in how I talk about this stuff.... I think that's because I started school early and skipped through. I learned early, from my father's stiff upper lip, to control myself, not to get too excited.

I've always tried to maintain a certain distance, keep in my head. I used to think that was a good thing. I don't now. When you're too busy analysing, you don't experience things as they're happening. I used to think, "chill out." I'm trying to let go of the coldness. But on the other hand, I really do dislike people who have to act out everything--everything is high drama, always getting carried away.... I get a lot of good stuff from my mom. It took a while to get to know her. I think she's depressive, dissatisfied with her role in life. She's just not very happy, but she doesn't break down or cry. From her I learned how to express emotions in an acceptable way--even, not too hyper. It makes it easier for others to relate that way.

The [role] message for me was definitely the stereotypical one, heightened by my dad's anal-retentive personality. Tight, controlled, focussed. Women are allowed to be hyper-emotional, operatic almost. I was never *told* to contain it, but.... My sister, if she was to be taken seriously at all, was required to elevate everything.... My mother consciously chose not to lay expectations. My Dad wanted a hyper-intellectual little kid with no social contacts who would become professor emeritus or something.... He wanted me to do what he didn't.

I was picked on as a kid because I was younger. I wanted to be different, detached. Sometimes I played at being weird, yes. That was really the stupidest thing as I look back on it. People resent it, it doesn't work.

I feel connected at this moment, but I don't always feel that way. I have no idea what I want to do career-wise. I change philosophies and systems of thinking about every couple of months. Part of me thinks it's good to be focussed, to have one philosophy.... Part of me thinks that we have to figure out why the world is as it is. I don't think that ever gets resolved.

I don't really have doubts about marriage as a long-term thing. Of course, I still think about *who* it would be best to do that with. Sexually, I have a strong desire for a monogamous relationship. I've never wanted to be promiscuous or to experiment with sexuality. ***It's kind of the rock on which I build my confusion*** . . . . I want somebody who's interesting, and interested; someone with enthusiasm and passion. You don't always have to *share* the passion, say for collecting license plates. A sense of humor would be good. Sometimes you can look to a partner for something you really don't have yourself.

Children. Ooh... confusing. In the abstract kids are really annoying. Of course, I get all googly-eyed about kids when I get sucked into their spell. Whether I want kids or not depends on what kids are around at the time. Of course it would depend on Barb too. Right now I can't even *picture* being a father. It's a massive responsibility. I find many families with little kids tired, depressed, depressing. The house falls apart, you always sit on plastic blocks. I know in 10 years I'll feel differently.

Probably, despite his good qualities, my father would be a negative example of a role model for being a man. Of course I pick up things from my friends. I read a lot of books about people, heroes, guys you'd say, "I'd like to be like that." I've just read *Of Human Bondage* Even though he has a lot of flaws, he has a sensitivity, he's attuned to other people. He's very gentle with other people. I'd like to be like that. *Breathing Lessons* by Anne Tyler: he's cold and stiff and unforgiving but honest. I say, wow, I'd like to be like that. Those ideas change over time.

There's a big conflict between being honest and being nice. I never quite resolve that: being strong and being emotionally attuned.... A while ago Barb was in Toronto and I did a groping thing with a girl in a bar. I had to tell Barb about that--and the girl about Barb. It was really hard to decide whether to be honest or to spare their feelings a little. The more emotionally attuned you are to others, the stronger you have to be to be honest with them.... In the process, I found out Barb had also had a little fling. I convinced myself I was more pure than her. I got her to feel sorry for me! I learned that skill well from my father. A power trip.... I don't like it.... Control or power is a conscious thing. Aloofness is more of a characteristic that usually comes from shyness. You can act aloof to gain power, of course. All of this has been an annoying realization for me.

Essaying the conversation.

Erik captures the notion of the young adult search for identity and intimacy in our time. If his generation is to have a place, it will be a place forged by their initiative and creativity. The paradigm, the economics, and the jobs are shifting rapidly. "Change" has been a constant in their short lives so far, in a way that it is perhaps not so true for older generations. I have come to admire and even envy at times their healthy attitudes about intimacy and commitment. I am thinking here primarily of the common preference for group rather than pair activity. Erik *plays* with possibilities in relationship, with the dyad and the group, with the idea of marriage and children, with ideas about career. But it is a serious play, played against notions of permanence--permanence expressed in monogamy is the "rock" on which he builds his "confusion." He does not have to declare himself for keeps yet, and I sense that he will not. Not just yet.

Erik worries about the society he lives in. Though he undoubtedly carries some of the residual burdens of his parents' generation, his burdens are different. War and its aftermath, for example, is still a reality in his world, but it is more the sanitized, "surgically precise" Gulf War or the remote ethnic wars than the World War II in Ron's story or the Vietnam War in Peter's. Erik does not have to decide whether to fight or flee the draft. The Oedipal Father's authority is eroding and being replaced by the Anal Father, in Lacan's/jagodzinski's terms. The effects of such a shift, along with the technological shifts that accompany and support it, are perhaps more profound than those of any war. For Erik, to the extent that he can "escape" the models of manhood provided by his father and his father's generation (and that, as we all know, is no mean feat), there are choices to be made among diverse possibilities. As I say this, I picture him amidst the "scene," playfully but very seriously considering his options in a postmodern identity marketplace..

As I say, it is no mean feat to re-write the family story, even if we are clear that we want to do so. I sense that if anything Erik downplays the confusion he feels about his age, the times he lives in, his family whose interactions trouble him. He assumes a "cool" Cartesian stance that is perhaps even more than that which is expected by his peers. It has perhaps served him well in the past. But he now has reservations about it: "When you're too busy analyzing, you don't experience things as they're really happening." He makes a choice not to follow his father's "anal-retentive" lead, drawing more now from his mother (or wanting to, at least). He makes a choice not to react in a theatrically overstated way, as his sister often does. Perhaps he still makes a choice not to feel some things, for to feel is to become embroiled and to have to take a stand.

Erik is remarkably insightful and articulate about what he sees at home. It must be said that he certainly seems to have been loved and cherished as a child. He struggles to find a model for how he should be in the world of intimate relation, given that he finds his family problematic. As Erik talks with considerable affection--or at least respect--of his parents, I am struck yet again by the tragedy of desires unfulfilled, unfulfillable, even inexpressible. On his account, his parents would feel enclosed and constricted by social conventions. They would likely say they are "fine"; Erik, with clear-headed analysis, says they are not (but he is). Every generation carries baggage from the past, even if the baggage is to claim there is no baggage and that everyone is free to be themselves.

Erik's generation may feel more free to express different notions of identity and intimacy--to "perform" masculinities in Butler's terms--though there is an inevitable pressure, it seems, from the embodied imperatives and themes of the past. The Law is crumbling, but Erik is not yet freed from the father/Father. An implicit theme in our conversation is his determination not to identify with hegemonic manhood. It will be interesting to meet him again over the years; to see how he manages to move beyond the legacy of his forefather(s).

Peter, 49, Early childhood professional

"The good helper."

I'm still enjoying the work with children. For a long time now I've had a strong connection to children in their lives.... If children are our most important resource, it's frustrating that we are so reluctant to put a priority on what happens for them.

Working in a traditionally "women's profession" is something I live with on a daily basis. I'm respected by the people I work with. I want to feel that I'm providing the children with a different kind of model of what maleness can be; to be able to relate to them in a way that they can experience the nurturing side of maleness. I'm still quite comfortable, too, with the more traditional rough and tumble of maleness, so I'm not trying to present a one-sided version. My personal sense of being a man is that I can combine both. It's a constantly evolving thing, and I haven't clearly delineated it except in occasional conversations like this one.... In trying to define maleness, I try to start from a personal point of view of commonality with women rather than difference.... I'm quite happy working in an area where women predominate. I'm much more comfortable with the style of teamwork that I've found working with women. I find I have a common ground with women in their feelings about the importance of nurturance and the importance of relationship, as well as the conventional male model of assertiveness and competitiveness. But I can still combine the two. For me it isn't either-or.

I've been living with this model in my work for quite some time. It doesn't end up being a tension at all-- I find the combination allows me to function in more of a balanced sense. I don't have to be right, it isn't a debate like it would be between men.... Taking it right down to childrens' lives, we had an example of this this year. We had a morning class of all boys but four, and an afternoon class of all girls but four. It's dangerous to generalize of course, and it's not a very empirical study! The difference that stands out is the two groups' strategies for conflict resolution.... We had to spend a great deal of time in the morning group constantly reinforcing the problem-solving model. When we didn't, the group quickly reverted to a competitive model of "might is right." In the afternoon class, when a conflict happened, you would get a group quickly working on solving it. Kids would come from across the room offering possibilities for solving it: "you could share it," "here, I have an extra one." The (gender) difference is an obvious reality, just as much in the adult world as with children. You see it in any work group, any committee. I'm not drawn anymore to the more traditional male stuff, though I do understand and even appreciate it.

When I look back on it, the earliest memory is of a strong connection with my mother. Her style of parenting was always that of a "good friend" rather than a distant authoritarian. My father was more of a passive individual, and he didn't balance that with a more typical male style. There were a few notable times when he would go over the edge, seemingly unpredictably. This would be in response to really emotional incidents. It wasn't like he was always working from a subverted sense of authority. He simply took a back seat to my mother. He was behind her, he concurred. But there was a distance--I grew up feeling that he was very ineffective as a father and that he was almost a little embarrassing, a bit of a goof. He was one of my Scout leaders. Though I enjoyed that in some ways, I remember thinking he wasn't sufficiently adult, a bit goofy. I've since come to value that quality highly, but while I was growing up I didn't. My mother reinforced that view, wanting him to be more assertive, more concerned with accomplishing things and getting ahead, making a better life for us.

I can only remember one incident when he and I even came close to any physical stuff. In a fit of rage, I made some disparaging, probably even obscene remark about my mother, and we came very close to a fist fight over that. It scared the hell out of both of us, I think. I found it very scary to see that side of him, and to realize that had we come to blows I probably would have been the victor.

For 20 years, my dad was a Fuller Brush Man. This was his life as well as his business. He made these social calls with women, and sold them some products at the same time. With my mother's push behind him, he actually became one of the top salesmen in the States. Then the whole paradigm shifted and they threw out the friendly guy for the "hit em quick, go for volume" approach. That completely undid him. He tried a few other sales things. We were always comfortable financially, lived in a modest house like this one.

There are lots of connections between my Dad's work and mine. That's been one of the wondrous discoveries of my adulthood. I have to mention here that my mother always worked outside the home too. That was quite unusual for those times. There was no child care so I was one of the original latch-key kids. I can remember being home alone in grade one. I had two brothers, but the youngest was many years younger so I didn't grow up with him. My middle brother and I were quite adversarial. I was older and better in school while he was more competent in physical things. We were quite complementary in a way but we were bumping heads quite regularly by junior high.

My mother talked to me about it. He started going to a different junior high and excelled at the "football hero" thing.

Getting back to the seminal point, I remember quite clearly being in Toronto as a deserter. Coming to Canada was a whole different consciousness for me, a rebirth. I started to look about me with a new set of eyes. I sidled into the hippy thing. I started having some strong anger and resentment about the conventions I had grown up with, and started seeing some of my parents' values I had grown up with as not being the ones I treasured most. My mother got quite angry at some of the things I was saying, and said in one letter "You're getting more like your father every day." Bing! I hadn't thought about him in a long time. She meant that I was rejecting ambition, the better life, the good life, goals . . . .

I was in the Army. Following conventional wisdom, I got married when I was 19. I married a neighborhood girl that I met in church. I got one level of draft deferment. After four years together, we got an annulment. All of a sudden I was 23 and single. I went into the Army thinking I would serve in some capacity other than killing people-- I'd already decided that's one step I wouldn't take. I was appalled by these 18 year-olds who were being trained like Nintendo artists. I still would have taken a non-combat role but that didn't seem possible. When I got sent for advanced training, I was off to the resistance and over the border. I lived with a Quaker family. They suggested I go East to a less "hot" border crossing to apply for landed immigrant status.

Because I'd been raised in such a way that I'd been included in decision-making for a long time, my family respected my ability to make decisions for myself. They didn't have strong political feelings. To them it was just a logical thing to do. I didn't see them for years because it wasn't safe to go back. Technically, I could still be court martialled even today.

I look on it as one of the most wonderful events of my life. It was tragic, yes, but it also gave me the opportunity to revisit life from a different point of view. It opened my mind to a lot of possibilities I might not have experienced. Some of the things I value most now were seminal at that point, like the whole hippy search for truth, anything is possible, everything is questionable.... I also started to find value in non-material things.

I didn't think of these things before I made my decision. No, the first and foremost thing was not for my own life. The thought of killing someone else was totally abhorrent to me, and still is. If it came to your life or my life, I suppose I would defend myself or shoot back; but I would never allow myself to be in that situation.

There were supportive people. The decision didn't feel like bravery-- it was the only thing to do. Many draft dodgers referred to themselves as exiles, meaning that they would go back some day. For me, I'd been asked to do the unaskable. That was beyond the pale. I could no longer be involved in that society. Period. Ever.

I'm 49 now. That's a source of amusement more than anything. My wife is 10 years younger and I work with people who are generally much younger. People generally think I'm 10 years younger than I am . . . . A few years ago I was feeling in a career crisis. I ended up feeling really down on myself, questioning everything I had ever done or not done. In hindsight it was probably some kind of a mid-life crisis. I went out camping alone. After a day or so I started to come back in touch with who I am. It was quite a turn-around.

I'm quite satisfied with what I am. My wife would like to see me doing a degree, and I wouldn't mind that but personally I'm where I want to be. I hope someday my work and reputation will help me get recognition.

There is another seminal event we should talk about. Ending the relationship with Karen [third wife] was cataclysmic. At that point I was your stereotypical "good helper:" a nice guy, who was always doing the right thing, helping out, spending time with the kids, being there for his kids' births. It wasn't until she left, and I found myself alone with four young children, that I found myself into a trial by fire. I was transmuted from the helper to the responsible, in-tune one. All of a sudden the responsibilities were *mine* to deal with, no one else's. A good deal of the frustration that led to the breakup was related to the dilemma of being a good helper or being a fully responsible person. It was a huge crash course, compounded by the emotional upheaval of the breakup of a long-term relationship. It was another major rebirth for me.

My survival is about that cliche: self-esteem. I think part of it is the respect I was afforded as a child, no small part of which involved being alone a lot. I can remember feeling at age nine that I knew pretty well everything I needed to know to be an adult and get through life! I did get a few surprises of course . . . . There was always a phone link. Their feedback indicated I was cared for. I always felt there was an emotional and physical safety net. There was parental guidance. There were strong boundaries and check-in points. Due to the family's finances, my role was respected--primarily by Mom. Dad was always a presence, just never a leader.... My mother was a full-time caretaker: with us, my Dad, the people she worked with [as a secretary]. I function in much the same way. That model, and the sense of being respected, is the center of my work.

I don't remember feeling deprived in any way. I remember feeling quite free, that I could have as much responsibility as I had demonstrated I could handle. I had lots of play. I was also very aware of the adult role. Of course, once in a while I went over the edge.

The model of marriage I was given by my parents was, "until death do us part." But the assumptions upon which we begin relationships are serendipitous-- my relationships have all begun in a flash of passion . . . . I'd like to think all four relationships have been evolutionary. None were acrimonious. I'd like to think that we communicated well enough that the differences that remained were irreconcilable--all the complexities of these generalizations just rail at me. I was relating in a hugely dependent way, so Karen's leaving really catapulted me out of it.

Joan and I have been together for eight years now. Now my notion is that we're both single parents. We're both fully responsible for the kids, the family, our lives together. She's not the mom, me the dad; we're not cooked into those roles. We're different people--others were surprised we got together--but we complement each other. It's the most comfortable and most rewarding of the relationships I've been in.

We haven't had children together. For her it's a bit of a sore point, but I don't know if a child would really change things. Financially, we haven't been able to envision a scenario that would work. It would be a huge commitment. For me it's tempting, but I'm fully aware of what it would mean. We will soon have to make a firm choice.... It's been a battle for her to step into the parent role, to get connected with the children. It's been hardest on Jason; he's had some very heavy blows with mothers. He and Joan came to loggerheads and he left home at age 16. I don't trade in guilt much, but there are things I'd do differently. It's hard not to have regrets and sadness.... I still feel those issues are hugely important. The seminal one for me is still respect for children. Conventional schools are still hugely disrespectful of children.

I'd like to find a place to have impact in terms of seeing the [broader application of the] kind of model I feel I'm able to set out. Right now it's a model for education students and a few parents.

I'd love to be involved in a workshop series that would expose not only a teaching model but an interactional model. I feel my model of working with children is a very intimate model because I work through relationship with them. That's part of the respectfulness with them that I try to generalize to all my relationships. I feel quite open to allow relationships to develop to whatever depth the situation and our desires allow. One of the key things that has brought me into the field is childrens' openness--not just verbally but in every way. You can't fool children. I'd hesitate to use this term publicly [because of all the baggage it brings] but we instantly fall in love with each other, in the very best sense of that word. Intimacy is the word, but intimacy often seems to have a sexual connotation--I want to clearly differentiate from that.

I have a theory. I'm equally open to involvement with men or women, boys or girls; but I find girls' style easier to work with. I have no less interest or respect for boys. Males grow up in a desperate intimacy vacuum, a hunger. There is a lack of positive ways to work with that in society. No models. To be vulnerable is considered the ultimate weakness.

Women have hunger for intimacy too, but it's much more culturally acceptable.... I've been part of some mens' groups. I lost interest because there didn't seem to be enough in it for me. I found myself responding to their hunger. I have huge respect for the movement but it doesn't meet my need right now. There was such a gap between what they were saying and needing and what I was saying and needing. I felt out at the end of the pier on my own.

Essaying the conversation.

Peter has forged a manhood that seems by all accounts to be a comfortable one for him. He hints that it is perhaps more comfortable in the feminized space of his workplace than out in the more problematic spaces of men. He is in a nurturing profession and accustomed to taking the role of nurturer, so it is perhaps not surprising that he finds himself in a problematic position in relation to men who traditionally look to women to listen to their woes. He says it is more acceptable for women to have "hunger" for intimacy. It is difficult to avoid the question of Peter's four marriages. He has his own views on what went wrong, so it is not up to me to judge. It does strike me that there must be a certain apprehension in such a situation, a question of "will things work out this time"?

Peter speaks with great passion of his "intimacy" work with children (ever mindful of the potential difficulties of using such a word as a man). He works in a field and a space that is feminized by tradition and the relative absence of male teachers and even older teachers. His explanation of how he sees his place there is very engaging. He says he feels very comfortable in a "woman's world" and style, and yet says he actively values male ways of being. His project is help boys and girls experience the nurturing side of maleness, but also to help boys be valued for the more "rough and tumble." He wants to tame the excesses of hegemonic masculinity, but not to subvert it completely. Boys can still be boys in his classroom.

The parallels between Peter's work and his father's are striking. Both work, seemingly with comfort, in a feminized space. Both must find a place that allows them to keep their sense of manhood, but also one that is considered respectful of/by women. Peter at one point says that he once saw his father as "a bit of a goof," which makes the parallels all the more remarkable. Undoubtedly there is some narrative smoothing going on here. It would be interesting to talk with him in more depth about the process by which he comes to appreciate and draw from some of his father's qualities while selecting out those he finds more problematic. What man could not identify in some way with that project? In talking with Peter there is a paradoxical sense of hegemonic masculinity subverted, an almost androgynous identity position, and yet a strong theme of a masculine strength and energy. It is interesting that he uses the word "seminal" several times; I am guessing that he does so with conscious intent.

There are parallels between Peter's work as a male early childhood professional, and men working in social work. It *may* be easier for Peter than for male social workers, given that so few men enter his profession--there are few men to debate gender issues with. Young children *may* be less inclined than adults to challenge gender identities, though there are by Peter's account clear enough indicators of problematic gender formations. I find it striking though hardly surprising that gendered relational and problem-resolution modes are so entrenched at such an early age. There can be no doubt that it takes courage to take the kind of stance Peter articulates and performs. He seems to feel secure enough, in a way many men would not, to create a reflexive space within which to work out issues of gender. He seems very aware of his role and place. The curriculum he creates for and with children (in close partnership with women) is an exemplary one.

It is interesting to hear Peter's story of deserting from the army. Whether driven by fear or by principle, it must take enormous courage to take such a decision knowing the consequences for family relationships, one's sense of nationalism, and one's sense of manhood in the face of the Law. Can we raise our sons in flagrant defiance of the same Law? Peter does not say a lot about his son, other than saying he does not trade much in guilt. It does seem evident that he feels badly about the way things have turned out. He and I seem to share a strong commitment to the path of non-violence and child-centered education, though the matter of the gendered continuum of passivity-aggression is far from clear or settled in society today, or even in my own mind. A friend shares with me her concern (it is really her husband's concern) about whether they need to "toughen up" their gentle, quiet five year old son. I try to reassure her that he will not grow up to be a misfit, but I also feel some need to say that it is important that they not stand for any victimization by more aggressive children.

I am left with a strong sense of admiration for Peter's project and for the way he forges a role for himself. Part of my admiration is tinged with regret that I have not been able/willing to be present for children in the way he apparently has. The story he tells is a strong exemplar of the notion that we re-write our lives. The child really is father of the man, on this view. Peter "smoothes" his father's persona to his advantage. Does he pay a price for taming the excesses, even subverting the Law (as his father did)? Are other men able to allow themselves to understand, to consider his model as possibility?

Reflections on Conversational Themes

Each man tells a touching story of a life lived with intention, a life that re-writes the past in a more fulfilling version; a life constructed out of diverse experience, no doubt, but focussed on particular themes of struggle if not acute pain. In each case the conversants report that the fathers and the fathering they experienced were problematic in one way or another: authoritarian, abusive, physically or emotionally absent, addicted, underachieving, "goofy," mercurial, "anal." Though the hunger each man expresses may be for an affirmation of their personhood and maleness by either parent; it is striking to note that even where the mothers have been the emotional center of the family, and even where the mother's role is recognized in positive ways, the men come back in one way or another to the *fathers*. It is a commonplace in therapeutic work to note that where a child has been abused by a father, or has witnessed abuse by the father, that they will more often than not express a strong (albeit ambivalent and confusing) identification with him at some level. Clinicians would call it "traumatic bonding," a moving toward the perceived center of power--whether present or absent in body--in the family. Robert Bly will call it "father hunger," and he will say it is "hardwired."

To me the issues these men articulate are as much about the father's place in the symbolic order as about fathers in the flesh and blood (if such a distinction is ever meaningful). To focus on the power of the cultural Father is not to make solitary man's many and complex feelings any less real or poignant, but to theorize those feelings and their broader import in particular ways. We see many manifestations of the cultural Father and the symbolic order in these men's identity positions and intimate relations, but they are in no case unitary or unambivalent ones. It is useful to wonder about the ways in which the cultural father frames/enframes man's experience and story about the "real" father. In this connection, it is useful to ponder the sources of a father's enduring power even when he might not appear powerful or even present (physically or emotionally). It may be *particularly* useful to reflect on the power of the father who got away, the phantom father, father as lack. My own story is perhaps an exemplar.

Each man deals with Sedgwick's "line" and performs his sense of what masculinity is in a unique way more or less congenial to his stated view of himself. Viewed in an optimistic sense (and at this point I want to find grounds for hope), each man could be seen as an activist performing a healed/healing manhood rather than a reinscribed hegemonic one. Such performances are perhaps not "radical" ones if measured against contemporary identity possibilities, but they are inspirational nonetheless.

- Ron spends a great deal of time and energy in quintessentially male spaces. He is the man's man (frontier preacher) who passionately affirms the need for a strong military and opposes gun control. Remarkably, though, he also creates a self-reflective pro-feminist space and a political activist role for himself within it.

- Ken shuts men out of his life most of the time, even/especially in his all-male work environment. Though he describes being tough as nails on the job, he admits he can be reduced to tears by a song or a poem or his child's leaving home. Our conversation almost breaks down when I ask him if he has male friends; he wonders what is wrong with my head for asking such a question.

- Peter is the once army deserter and now early childhood professional whose mission is to subvert the worst of hegemonic manhood but affirm what is good about being a boy/man. He does so within a feminized and non-competitive space. He finds little for himself in the men's movement

- Robert crosses the line to come out as a gay man. He can now acknowledge his explicitly sexual "interest in men," and so he no longer has the same need to keep the barriers up as other men might feel they have to. We should not be surprised, though, that crossing the line resolves some issues and raises others. He has relationship issues every bit as poignant as any man's.

- Erik plays with notions of commitment and permanence, moving fluidly between male and female friendships and intimacies. He actively works to construct a manhood that is not "macho/jock". He thinks a lot about how he will *not* emulate his "stuck" father.

- Wilf works and lives comfortably with men and women by carefully maintaining boundaries and a sense of what is "real" and certain. He finds Canadians overly intimate, yet allows himself to feel, to express the sentimental, to care and be cared for.

It is striking too to note the similarities in many of the men's descriptions of their mothers. In one way or another, each of the mothers seems to be, or try to be, a bridge between the father and the child. None seems to succeed unproblematically. None succeeds without criticism and personal cost. To the extent that such is true, it signals the implicit strength of the hegemonic project as much as it says anything about these particular mothers or mothers/women in general. For several of the men, mothers are named as important mentors, though perhaps never without a measure of ambivalence. The ambivalence can, I think, be clearly linked to, among other things, the father who lacks: the father who says "do not be feminine," the father who implicitly expects the mother to do the intimacy work, the father who leaves a hole in the family, and the father who represents the Law (whether violently or more benevolently).

Do these men find intimacy in their lives? Yes, each does find a measure of intimacy, but never unproblematically and perhaps never "enough"on their account. Each struggles to sort out the intimacy thing for himself and with his important Others. Each finds a rather unique intimacy and framing of intimacy. Each struggles with the "child as father to the man"; wanting *to re-write* themselves to be different with others than their fathers were with them. This is particularly apparent with those who have children. As we already know, it is more difficult than it seems to break the old patterns:

- *Help us be part of the universe*. Ron struggles still to make sense of hurtful early life experiences, and he works intentionally every day to re-write those hurts as strengths. He knows that if he wants intimacy he has to make the first move to open himself to the world. As a clergyman, he creates rituals and provides inspiration and leadership that help others to find a connection with the universe, to belong somewhere--many of his "intimacies" are vicarious ones.

- *I can control it on a dime*. Ken's intimate circle is a small one indeed. Though he has worked hard to let go of the more abusive of his control techniques, it is clear that he still fears the consequences of letting go even with family. He expresses with quite remarkable clarity important issues of boundary, body, taboos--he has a harder time doing something with his insights that might bring him more human connection. He clearly exemplifies Bly's notion of the "father wound," and likely lives with some sense of that wound every day of his life.

- *If you're too involved, you can't see.* Wilf has found a very comfortable accommodation with the overly-familiar society he still finds so problematic. We might say that he "borrows" a certain intimacy from his wife, though he certainly gives much in return. He does not express strong feelings or regrets about the relative vacuum in father-models he experienced after the war.

- *There's something I won't settle for.* Robert sometimes lives with loneliness rather than enter into relationships that do not offer the promise of permanence and the kind of intimacy he wants. He will not settle for a relationship centered only on sexual relations. Nor, one suspects, will he settle for a relationship like his parents,' much as he appreciates what they have given him.

- *It's the rock upon which I build my confusion.* Erik, too, is unwilling to settle for a relationship like his parents.' Surprisingly, though, he views monogamy and commitment as the "rock" of his security.

- *The good helper.* Peter fashions a satisfying life and work on a project of subverting hegemonic manhood. Being the "good helper," the accommodating one is, I sense, giving way to a more clear vision of himself as strong but gentle man, activist, and equal partner in marriage.

A friend observes, in reading the conversations, that there is a strong sense of intimacy between each man and myself. There is a strong sense, too, of men unburdening themselves of stories they have carried for a long time. I take this less as a comment on my skills or good fortune in selecting men who are ready to talk, than as a comment on men's pain and deep need to talk with someone just outside the boundary lines of their "real" lives. Though I know the men, and certainly much more intimately now than before our conversations, I would likely never see them unless I made a point of doing so. On the surface of it, the conversations would seem to offer some contradiction to the thesis that men's emotional lives are subjugated or that men are often emotionally illiterate. I confess my own astonishment at some of the conversations. On another reading, the fact that they so need to talk may offer the strongest support for the thesis.

Weingarten's analysis of discourses may offer some insights into these men's struggles with intimacy. Each man, some more than others and certainly in different ways, is in his own "rowboat" trying to figure out who he is. Are these men trapped in their old stories, whether ones of wound, or lack, or strength? Do they dare to show Others who they are? What is the more compelling aspect of intimacy: who they "really" are deep inside, the person they bring to relation--or the rowing of the boat with another person? Do they find someone to answer when they call out into the "silence of the universe," or do they hear an echo of themselves?

Each of the men re-stories their pain and lack they to come to a position of some peace (albeit a shaky truce at times) with the past. Inevitably, there is a process of narrative smoothing, but I find the stories remarkably frank nonetheless. I feel constrained in interpreting the conversations. One constraint is a Gadamerian one. I am only one side of the conversation. My co-conversants do not have an opportunity to reflect in more depth with me on the "question to which conversation is an answer." True, I could invite them to do so, and such would make for an interesting "meta" conversation. But a spiral of further interpretation and conversation would then be called for. Interpretation is never finished.

There is another hermeneutic exercise going on; prompted, I say without due humility, by the very encounter of each man with this research on men's lives. Prompted by the research, each man re-stories, re-interprets, and re-constructs his life. Frigga Haug (1987) says of memory work that "our intervention is itself an act of liberation" (p. 35). She refers not only to an intervention that liberates one person, but an intervention that unsettles the way individuals reproduce society. The research intervention, the mere gathering of data, makes a statement to the cultural order. It gives men a new kind of voice, an *authentic* voice if I dare use that most problematic word. It is a voice that says "no" to hegemony.

I feel another hermeneutic constraint as an ethical one that goes to the heart of this project. *I now know these men.* We are now intimates even if we do not see each other. I am in awe of their willingness and ability to articulate what matters deeply to them, their risk, their vulnerability. Even if I had ever wanted to think of them as Other, as mere "data," I can no longer do so for I have looked into their faces and seen both pain and hope. I am responsible to them and *for* them in Levinas' sense. I want to take their part, to be a bridge between them and my reader; even to say "You *must* hear and understand their story of struggle." Still, it must be acknowledged clearly that the "whole" story has not been told and can never be told (and could never be fully understood by another anyway).

Chapter Eleven

EPIPHANIES

Paying My Debts

As I languish in the binary prison, I realize anew my debts to the very culture I am at pains to critique. A friend says to me, "Is this some male thing, that you have to write everything you have ever known or read"? It is, of course, precisely that: a compelling need to cover all the Cartesian possibilities rather than going to the "heart" of the matter. Unwittingly, by focussing on man's hegemonic structures and the ideologies that support them, that is, by opting for a political project, I elide many intimate particularities of men's and women's lives. Foucault helps us to see that it is the particularities that constitute power, resistance, the constitution of selves. It is in the particularities of lived manhoods that we can find hope. But it is the particularities that men so often discount. I am not immune.

Some other debts do have to be paid. The first is to the straw man as He languishes in the garden trying to scare the birds away from the berry patch. He has developed all sorts of gadgets to help him do the job, in a way reminiscent of Sam Keen's *husband*, the man who prudently manages the land and all that lives there. The garden has never looked so good or so productive. If I could I would want now to invite the straw man in to tea, as a guest who might still tell me much about myself and the how world is constructed. *Cogito, ergo sum.* The words still have palpable power. It's a funny thing, though-- I no longer feel like I either have to agree with him, or wrestle him to the ground, or piss around the boundaries of the garden. I hear Lacan's voice saying that the *cogito* is precisely what we do not think, that is, the unconscious. Where I and the straw man think we are is precisely where we are not. Certainty is once again shown to be illusory.

I owe much to all three of my Renaissance friends. I trace my new-found passion for uncovering Man's origins in his-story to the little Rembrandt self-portrait, to Michel de Montaigne's essays, and even to the story of René Descartes' winter in the little poêle in Ulm. I come to feel an intimacy with these men, even over a space of four centuries (my reader will perhaps note that such intimacy leads me to some quite anachronistic and even naive questions about their material lives). I owe a great debt to all of the other thinkers that I cite and to the systems of thought and traditions and currents of scholarship they represent; even as I feed selectively and sometimes even cavalierly feed on their essays. Conflation and reductionism are the inevitable concomitants of my need to find voice for a lifetime of concerns, to find a wholeness that makes sense.

It cannot have escaped my reader's notice that I *still* seem to want to say no to psychoanalysis. But I am no longer so sure what it means to say no, for the terms of my engagement with it have changed. One way to struggle with the phallic Law is to deny its very existence and power in one's "free" life. One way to struggle with knotty questions of body and identity is to deny one's indebtedness to origins. One way to struggle with the dilemmas of representation is to deny the limits of "reels on reels" of language. Our whole society is in denial of these things right now. In uncanny ways Freud and Marx still do represent the "you there, halt" of the customs officer at the gates of the knowledge industry. My first reading of the officers' injunction is about the authority of the Law, about author-ization. But the hailing is also a reminder of questions that cannot be brought to language (that which Lacan would call the Real). To say no to psychoanalysis is to claim that everything is as it appears to be, no more, no less--another authoring problem.

Another debt must be reckoned with, and that is to essentialism. The entire thesis rests on a monstrous essentialism: the premise that anything can be said any more (if indeed it ever could) about *Man*. All of human science is lost if we cannot essentialize, albeit with great care and circumspection. All of language hews to essential concepts. Life would be chaos without some sense of "this is how things are"-- we cannot live for long in a state of contingency. To say no to essentialism, then, amounts to saying no to the *conditio humane* and indeed to the whole wondrous search for knowledge. To say yes to essentialism in all its variants, on the other hand, is to say yes to hegemonies of sameness and category and predestination. Many men, and perhaps many women, will want to exclude themselves from my pronouncements.

I owe a great debt is to Man/hood him/itself. I look yet again at Rembrandt's little self-portrait and think about the goodness that is manhood (willing myself to momentarily "forget" its excesses and lacks). I owe so much to father, son, brother, colleague, teacher, student, and friend. I owe a particular debt to the men who converse with me. There is a pressing need for men to find more accurate descriptors for contemporary men's "movements" such as mythopoetics, the men's rights and men's Right movements, academic men's studies, Christian-based groups such as Promise Keepers, and what might be called men's "consciousness-raising" groups. I want to say that these fledgling movements should find a unity of purpose, but to say so is to invite new hegemonies.

My greatest debt may be to Woman, giver of life, and to the feminine that has so long been reviled and denied by Man. This dissertation and the whole notion of "men's studies" would not even be thought of were it not for the example and challenge of feminism. Mother, wife, daughter, colleague, teacher, student, and friend have taught me and given me so much. One of manhoods greatest mistakes is to deny such a debt, to fear such power.

Who Won the Binary War, Daddy

We are in the midst of what Moore (1988), echoing many others, calls a "profound binary crisis" (p. 175). The so-called *gender war* lies at the core of that crisis. Woman has always been Man's declared Other and even enemy when there is a gender war, whether she is defined as "man who lacks" or as radical Lack. Power is always at the center, but power is an elusive thing. When men "win" in the gender war, or even when they think they win--they lose. When man is most hegemonic or even abusive, he is apt to be informed/deformed by a deep sense of power subverted or wounded. It is a wound that cannot be spoken; only, on Gray's account, "written on the body of the Other." When will men "see"?

Why, we might well ask, speak of a gender "war"? Michael White argues that the gender war (particularly in its essentialist variations) is a set-up by Man, a "ruse" to elide issues of power differential and many other things. It burdens women with responsibility for a situation they are not free to choose. ITo speak of war is already to claim ascendency for certain terms of engagement, for a male tradition and male hegemony, no matter how solitary man might blame/whine and say he has been victimized in the encounter. It is quite difficult, it seems, for men to acknowledge their complicity in and dividend from hegemonic manhood. The enemy is *within* manhood; masquerading as men looking after business, men looking after men's interests and the "line". It is often hidden as "healthy competition" on the "level playing field." The enemy, on solitary man's account, is also within himself, between the *je* and the *moi*.

I treat men's *whining* with a certain measure of disdain. This is perhaps neither fair nor, in the end, very useful, for however one might feel about whining or about its possible political agendas, it undoubtedly does represent the feelings of many men who are unsure of where they stand. The political agendas of men who whine in particular ways, whether in a micro-context of family and other intimate relation or a broader social context, must be taken seriously. Ironically, it seems that the masochistic new White male whiner--caught in a perception that he must become hypermasculine to counteract a feminizing current in contemporary society--"takes up a feminized positionality"or declares himself the "new nigger" (citing Zelditch in Savran, 1997, p. 129). It is another clever gender gymnastic exercise: On a Lacanian account, man "wins" both ways, by both *having* and *being* the phallus (Savran, p. 132). The white male-as-victim can be a dangerous man indeed; there is malevolent power in his victimhood. But as usual, when man wins, he loses.

McNamara, Sedgwick, Battersby, Weil, Silverman, Butler.... Yet another brilliant woman exposes the Olympian male gender gymnastics event for the masquerade party or "fiction" that it is. What is most startling for me in the feminist essays I cite is their documentation of the taken-for-grantedness of Man's appropriations of femaleness, set against his seemingly compelling need to discredit the very same qualities in Woman. The myths of Adam and Eve and the androgyne set the tone for this project (though there was undoubtedly gendered life long before that). *Logos spermatikos* represents an enduring hegemony. Can men successfully challenge men from within manhood? Can power and privilege critique Power, Silence, the Invisible? Can men dare to notice and declare that *the emperor has no clothes....* Yes, but it is exceedingly riskful.

The solution is not to deify women, to recreate the all too familiar Madonna on a shaky pedestal waiting to Fall; nor is it to reimpose her exile from man's identities. Women, like men, bear responsibilities for the particularities of gendered life. The point is not to suggest, either, that women do not have voice or agency, or that life is a simple matter of the binary of dominator and subordinate. Women, and men, always find ways to resist and reconstitute themselves. Nor is it to say that contemporary man's pain and sense of dislocation is not real enough. It is perhaps more to try to understand both the inventiveness and price of hegemony, and the inventiveness and price of resistances. Man simply must find the a new courage, not to "take it like a man" or "take it out on woman," but to acknowledge his pain as his responsibility. He is beginning to do so.

Barthes (1978) says "The discourse of Absence is a text with two ideograms: there are *the raised arms of Desire*, and there are the *open arms of Need.* I oscillate, I vacillate between the phallic image of the raised arms, and the babyish image of the wide-open arms" (pp. 16-17). Man struggles for all of his life with the primal renunciation and its reappearances. Valerie Solanas, echoing Lacan, says that "Being an incomplete female, the male spends his life attempting to complete himself, become female" (cited in Moore, 1988, p. 167). Barthes says: "In any man who utters the other's absence something feminine is declared.... *The future will belong to those in which there is something feminine*" (p. 14). Barthes is a clever gymnast indeed as he sets out to overturn the phallic Law and essentialize Woman. . Moore is critical of Barthes' project, arguing that woman's identity is no more certain than man's: "Femininity is the perfect simulacrum--*the exact copy of something that never existed in the first place*" (p. 181). Is all gender a simulcrum?

Body Matters

Lehman says that "in a patriarchal culture, when the penis is hidden, it is centered." If such represents man's power, it also represents his greatest alienation. The feeling body must not be allowed its say lest "it" reveal the monstrous "fiction" that sustains its power. Vulnerability threatens the whole mythical structure of phallic manhood, and so it must be denied at all costs. Nelson and Justad, among others, advocate a "transvaluing" of the genital organs to bring emptiness, flaccidity and vulnerability into a rhythm and place of honor in man's construction of himself. jagodzinski wonders why men do not simply find a new metaphor to replace that of phallic hardness. Why indeed?

Man's body--heterosexually-identified man's body in particular--is remarkably unremarked unless it lets him "down" (such must be an epidemic if we believe the *Viagra* stories). How many heterosexually-identified men could be as frank as queer theorist Robert Reid-Pharr (1996) in articulating the mind-body relationship and its anbivalences and ambiguities?

> If there is one thing that marks us as queer--a category that is somehow different, *if not altogether distinct from the heterosexual*--then it is undoubtedly our relationships to the body, particularly the expansive ways in which we utilize and combine vaginas, penises, breasts, buttocks, hands, arms, feet, stomachs, mouths and tongues in our expressions of not only intimacy, love and lust, but also, and importantly, shame, contempt, despair, and hate. (p. 39)

What do we make of men's (particularly younger men's) growing interest in adorning, piercing and perfuming his body? Ordinary men cannot be oblivious to advertisements of diverse and picture-perfect manhoods (including gay and androgynous representations), even if they only buy magazines "for the articles." Ordinary men are suddenly persuaded and allowed to look at other men's bodies. Leaving aside the matter of who promotes and who profits from such interest, does it signal Man's willingness to value and to open his body and other men's bodies in new non-instrumental and non-homophobic ways? The "line" is surely softening. Whether it is softening in the direction of a new sense of intimacy and community, or in the direction of narcissism and frenetic pleasure-seeking, remains to be seen.

David Levin documents all too clearly the consequences of Man's ocularcentrism, epitomized in the panoptic gaze. He advocates that men allow themselves to cry the speech of powerlessness, and that the gaze be rehabilitated to a playfulness that does not seek to totalize all that lies within its horizon. Man will be the richer for allowing himself to "see" and be seen in new ways. He will be the richer for taking a new kind of ownership of his senses in the service of a whole man: a man who listens with care, a man who feels a body of pain and of joy, perhaps even a man who values and is valued for bodily smells (some will say I go too far).

It is by now a commonplace to say that for men emotions represent the Achille's Heel or point of vulnerability. I am often struck by men's grand gestures of feeling. It is not, of course, either true or fair to say that men do not feel or even that they do not express feeling. But men very often deny feelings to a point where they must be expressed in the grand gesture, much akin to what Brooks calls the *melodrama*--the desperate call to Other to be totally understood. We can never "say it all," of course, and we can never be totally understood. Sometimes the best we can do is to acknowledge that there are no words. I am reminded of my moment of speechlessness at "Duane's Creek," a moment I might now link to Lacan's Real. For some men the grand gesture is a menacing one of violence, a demand for Other to tell him the secret about himself that he cannot comprehend. But it is perhaps more often a gesture of love or passion. Ken expresses the dilemma well: "I'm a kid again, with no fences.... My body [illegible]xed up."

But simply working to become more open about feelings will not be enough. A new critical reflection--new, that is, for manhood--is called for. Jackson (1990) says "What is needed now is for more men to come out of hiding and to start excavating, *in public*, the sedimented layers of their own particular and diverse life histories" (p. 3). Men would be well served to attend to the particularities of events and emotions that they so often devalue. The excavation is of course a personal one, but it must also be a collective one. Men's bodies and feelings, their most closely held personal stories, will only come out of hiding when the cultural stories and their restraining power can also be exposed to critical reflection. Such is unlikely, again, for as long as men associate such exposure with femaleness. Such is difficult because men, though they may very effectively look out for men's interests, struggle against identifying with the collective--to do so feels like foregoing a sense of self and sovereignty. The task is all the more daunting in a time when the "real," the manufactured, and the virtual are so intertwined; in a time when the agency of the Self is so vaunted and yet so limited and surrounded by the very same technologies.

Whither Gender

In the early days of the women's movement it seemed useful enough for some "enlightened" men to appropriate the feminist cause and, implicitly, to cast Man (their own gender) as Other. In time it has become a commonplace to say that women cannot do it for men, and men cannot do it for women. Whether due to a new clarity of critical analysis, or simply due to women's impatience with what Lynn Segal calls men's "slow motion" toward change, feminists no longer seem so open to men's overtures or so patient in waiting for them to catch up. For men now to say *feminism*, whether in the name of compassion or solidarity or social justice, may obscure their own responsibilities and issues as *men*. I am not, on this account, advocating that men "go away mad" or take up Bly's, Farrell's, Gurian's, or Gray's separatist projects. If intimacy is not well served by appropriations and misappropriations, neither is it well served by acceding to the terms of gender war and gender separatism. We must learn to live with(in) profound contradiction.

If there is a demon in essentialism, it may inhere less in the blatantly political essentialist revival projects of Bly and others (troublesome though we *should* find them, they are at least within our vision) than in what Harold Garfinkle calls the "incorrigibility" of *implicitly held* "natural attitudes" toward gender (cited in Hawkesworth, 1997, p. 649). If we could agree that a loosening of the bonds of essential gender identity to biological sex is desirable, we would still have to debate whether it is possible. Judith Butler's view of sex, sexuality and gender as discursive "performances" that "produce" the body is perhaps a promising one. On her account, the performance is all there is; it is not backed up by some essential or unitary or stable identity. We, with Butler, should be interested in "*what is left out of discursive formations that construe sex/gender/desire as natural*" (cited in Hawkesworth, p. 667).

If manhood and womanhood are seen as *performances,* it perhaps becomes possible to dislodge the biological essentialism of sex and the universalizing and determinising essentialisms of gender. There are encouraging signs of some erosions. By all accounts, contemporary genders are being "performed" in ways that promise, if not a virtual end to gender, at least some interesting and useful variations. I wonder if it might be worthwhile to encourage a kind of interim separatism not founded in either hegemony or victimhood; mutually respectful but separate spaces within which men and women might feel freed to reflect on who they have been and who they wish to be, and on the very terms by which they want gender matters to evolve. Some contemporary men's and women's groups offer such possibilities. Of course, such a utopian view does not answer the pressing Other questions of diverse sexualities, diverse identities defined by race and ethnicity, diverse opportunities defined by income and many other things.

Sedgwick (1995) says that "masculinity and femininity are in many respects orthogonal to each other" (p. 15). One is not more or less, above or below the other. Such a notion promises to releases gender from the binary prison, opening many possibilities for difference--the very reference points for "same" and "different" are transformed and their power valence removed. Sedgwick also works to decenter the "natural attitude" by saying in her inimitable way that masculinity often has got nothing to do with men--both men and women "consume" and "perform" masculinities (and femininities). If masculinity has got nothing to do with men, where does that leave my thesis about men and intimacy? If "it" has got nothing to do with men, what on earth does it have to do with? These notions are exciting but daunting prospects in a time already beset by uncertainty. Perhaps it is these *very* possibilities that so terrify men and drive them to their "caves."

On a more pessimistic note, I am struck over and over by the realization that the more things change, the more they often seem to stay the same. The history of manhood is a history of gender gymnastics. If it were not so serious a matter, it could sometimes be entertaining. I think here of McNamara's *Herrenfrage*, Battersby's essay on *genius*, the retooling of Christ as a more masculine figure, the invention of homosexuality. No, it is not amusing at all-- someone always suffers or loses. Man, at least man of privilege, develops ideologies and moves them around, chameleon-like, to suit the vagaries and social upheavals of the time. Man is still doing so. But he is being challenged. He is challenging himself.

I succumb to pessimism too readily. I am delivering the eulogy for a friend's son who dies in a car accident a few days before just before his 24th birthday. Mark obviously has many friends, male and female, and I am sure they are all here in the church. Four young *men* come to the front. Each speaks with incredible clarity and feeling of Mark, of their grief. One of them picks out Mark's favorite tune on his guitar. They stand, then, for a moment, hug, and sit down. The moment will stay with me forever; even in my feelings of grief for Mark's friends and family, I feel a great sense of hope for the world and for *men*. These young men seemed so much at ease with expressing their inner selves, their vulnerability, their life-long bonds of friendship; in a way that my generation and my father's generation struggle with-- in silence. They do not seem so afraid of the feminine.

My nephew's team is playing a Little League baseball final game. I am not a baseball fan, but I am somehow captivated by the two sets of coaches, the players, and the families in this important final game. Something profoundly different is happening on each side. The players on the opposing team, including one girl, seem tense and afraid of making a mistake. When they do, they can count on an angry word from the coach. Each player on my nephew's team can count on an affirming word after each play, each strike, each run, each mistake. The message is not so much "do what you like, it's all fine," but more like, "you are a good person, you are learning, and whatever you do no one can take that away from you." The young male coaches are *emotionally connected* to these young boys-who-would-be-men. "Our" team won the final game decisively, which I mention only to counter the notion that intense competition is the only way to win (we are not quite ready to give up on the importance of winning).

Of Mentors

Keith's earlier story of the father who never comes to the game leads me to wonder whether it is really we in older generations of men who have the "problem." Can we presume to mentor younger men? He retells his story to another group today, but with a difference. He has just come from reading a story to his son's kindergarten group. He tells us about noticing, out of a corner of his eye, the little quiver in his son's chin as His Dad reads. His own chin quivers as he tells us about it. He talks about the "nice little group of boys" who are his son's friends.... The circle has come around. Change is possible. Keith has shown up for the important game. His son will without question show up when his turn comes.

Each Saturday morning as I change in the locker room after my modest workout, I notice younger fathers and their pre-school sons and daughters talking as they manage the seemingly endless changing process. Some of the fathers seem perfectly comfortable in this role; comfortable in a way I know I have never been. Some still seem ill at ease, and I hear a tentativeness and sometimes a brittleness in their voices. I imagine that this is very new territory for them. But they are doing it, and their little children are unfailingly adoring. It would be premature to declare the end of fathers' absence in a younger generation. Yet, there are signs of change.

Are boys/men and society really well served by devaluing the unique wisdoms of younger men and boys to the mosaic that is manhood? Michael White, in his blistering critique of Bly's project, argues that older men have more to gain from younger men than the reverse. In his "just therapy" work, he often invites younger men to challenge and resist the hegemony of the dominant story by reflecting on how they have contributed to their *fathers'* lives. It is through learning from and with his son that Keith completes the circle and resolves the wound that he would say he has carried around for so long. It is through learning from and with their children that the young men in the locker room come to new conceptions of manhood.

The first mentor was Athena, the goddess of wisdom and war and patron of *techne*, the practical arts and crafts; a powerful woman-figure indeed. She came to comes to the young Telemakhos in the guise of an old man, Mentor, who will act as a "*stand-in for the father*". The father is off at war--he is an absent presence, represented by the *goddess*, as the young Telemakhos sets out to search for an identity of his own (cited in Daloz, 1983). The stand-in of our time is often Mother. Bly damns mothers and "instigating women" with faint praise, but acknowledges that it is women who are "particularly attuned to the fragmentation and incongruities of postmodern life, and, most importantly, to the man's shaming wound" (cited in Lee, 1998, p. 210). The point is not to dismiss the importance of fathers but to suggest that Women have always been responsible for bringing the fragments together into whole cloth (an outrageous essentializing, my reader may say). Lee, in writing of Michael Dorris' male characters, says they are "virtually selfless until they are galvanized by the scintilla arising out of a challenging love relationship with a woman" (p. 210). Dorris' close collaboration with his wife, writer Louise Erdrich, is well known. I am deeply saddened to hear of his recent suicide.

Are men, then, well served by devaluing the contributions of the goddess and of more earthly women as mentors, particularly in matters of relation? Man cannot do "it" without Woman. Perhaps Woman cannot do it without Man (at least men have always claimed so). The hegemonic power of binary gender definitions separates them unnecessarily. I am reminded of Weil's "hermaphroditic difference" and the folly of any search for unity in sameness. Should the end of gender come about, it will not signal the end of difference but rather new openings for ever-more interesting performances and ever-more interesting differences.

Hearing Other Voices

Manhood is still, in all too real ways, a "dominant fiction." I am struck by the juxtaposition of patriarchal ideologies of hegemonic power against the brittleness and even fragility of manhood's constructions. It is striking to note how dependent manhood still is on its "not," on its Others. As I write, there is a huge controversy going on about gay rights. It is frightening to contemplate the implications of such a hateful denial of difference and personhood amidst the "already crossedness" of the lines dividing men. Is hegemonic manhood being decentered, is it decentering itself? If we take the rampant homophobia only at face value, the answer is no, hegemonic manhood is as strong as ever. But such would be a simplistic conclusion. Paradigms do shift with lightning speed when their time has come. Revivals of homophobia might be taken as an indication that the paradigm is shifting-- it is a last gasp response to the realization that something big is in the works.

Contemporary homosexualities represent, if anything, a growing range of performances. Hegemonic man has been preoccupied at least since Aristotle, with defining manhood and its "perversions" in terms of a "line" defined by "nots": not *effeminate* and not *passive*. The fact that neither comes close to defining the diversity of contemporary male homosexualities seems to elude the hegemonic structure. The very exile of the feminine and the demonization of passivity are, of course, defining conditions for "paranoic" hegemony. Contemporary queer studies is often successful in deconstructing and exposing such paranoia for what it is.

My personal androgyny project (or rather the motives for embracing it) is defunct. It has its uses in practice, but it does not work in theory. If there are lingering attractions, Weil's historical review discourages them. Though androgyny may yet emerge as one of many possible identity positions in a new order of things, it is at the moment captive of capitalism. It is a brand-name androgyny, carefully clothed, coiffed, and perfumed. I am left in awe of hegemonic manhood's ability to assimilate such "Others" to its project and thus to contain their threat. But it is more than a containment of the gender "spill," for within the dominant paradigm, Other/Otherness is absolutely necessary to the maintenance of the Same.

Thomas King, author of *Medicine River* (1989) concludes a humorous (1997) public talk with a surprising zinger: "I like to leave a scalpel cut for the reader; a little cut that will fester and bother for awhile." King does not say that his project is about masculinity, or that the "cut" is intended for men, or that it is a Freudian cut; but it would perhaps not be a stretch to assume all of these things. Jack Robinson and Don Fisher (1998), in a sympathetic commentary on King's work, invoke Susan Sontag's notion of photography as a "predatory" act." It can be a colonizing act on behalf of the dominant society. King uses the trope of photography in the novel in a more emancipatory way to help his reader "'associate' with the native world 'without being encouraged to be a part of it'" (citing King, p. 2). Manhood in that world is not defined by the dominant "colonial" view; but rather by traits often associated with the feminine. The dominant culture's lone man as hero is, on Robinson's and Fisher's reading, replaced by a manhood moving slowly if often erratically and uncertainly toward community, a manhood aware of its debts to Nature and the Mother, a manhood as "spiritually available" to the world as it can be, a manhood always provisional and in flux. It is not an unproblematic or glorified manhood by any means. Dominant man has long felt comfortable with its "Tonto." What will He do with the scalpel cut that King initiates, the challenge that is framed as invitation to "associate"?

David Nelson says, "We are a new breed of men--black warriors, the last poets of the world--and we will re-create this world in honor of our fathers, whose unwent tears, even now, well up inside us *turning into spear points*" (cited in Seelow, 1998, p. 158). *Rap* and other Black poetics invoke another kind of festering cut that is much less subtle and much less inclined to live and let live with dominant masculinity--or so it seems. The metaphor of "loudness" and silence is central to Seelow's point. Both Robert Bly and Ice Cube loudly invoke essential and fierce manhoods that are ostensibly on opposite sides of a race divide. Ostensibly. Both are wildly successful with, perhaps, different age demographics. Bly is not apt to appeal to Black men of any age. I have to wonder, then, about Ice Cube's appeal to young White men as evidenced in his financial success. A dominant, albeit young, masculinity must somehow manage to elide rap's racist invocation in order to appropriate the hegemonic loudness. There is a stunning silence about other things.

Savran (1997) thickens the question, again in reference to Robert Bly's "deep masculine" that invokes a Black African initiation ritual involving the sharing of other men's blood. Savran wonders whether Bly's appropriation of a Black masculinity that he sees as less feminized, this "*desire to be the other*," does not "at the same time betray a barely concealed *terror of the other*" (p. 141). Black masculinities have long sparked such ambivalence on behalf of dominant manhood, but in the end the ambivalence always seems to work against the minority, no matter how loud or even profitable some of its voices may have become. Again we see that dominant masculinity needs its Other.

Honoring the Father

I get the call from my mother that I have been expecting and dreading. She has done her best--she knows it, my father knows it. My "kid" sister and I take turns watching and dozing off. Even preparing for it doesn't cushion the shock and sadness we feel. He is up, struggling around the house with his cane, every 15 minutes all night. We wonder how long his body can take this. The night passes, like a surreal movie-- the breaking of dawn is a relief. Taking him to the hospital promises to be the hardest thing we have ever done. This suddenly frail man, this agitated shadow of a former self, still has power for me. He wants to go back into the house, put it off for one more day. But now we must trade places, and I hear myself as though from some other world *telling my father what he must do.*

The drive to the hospital is only a few minutes, but it seems to go on forever. It is the hospital I worked at, over thirty years ago. The hurts, real and imagined, slip away. I am pulled back to the important times we have shared: building things with the old oil stove thumping away, driving home from work in the old Stude, going to the Royal for chips. I remember Edwin, the famous whistling carpenter, the old toque that so embarrassed my sisters, the shoes with the turned up toes. I say something to him about wishing we didn't have to do this. In a moment of clarity, he says he wishes so too. I even imagine a hint of a smile. *It shouldn't be this way, turned upside down.* But painful though it is, it has perhaps always been that way as the generations go through the changing of the guard.

It gets harder to visit as he loses ground. The hands, once powerful and skilled, now frail and thin, represent my loss as much as his. As I leave, one day, I summon up the courage to hug him and tell him, ever so faintly, that I love him. For a moment I'm not sure he even hears me, and I almost hope he hasn't. But then I hear him say, ever so faintly, that he loves me too. *We have never said this to each other.* The sky doesn't fall in. I feel giddy and yet a little embarrassed-- like why does such a simple thing take half a century? How can my brother and sisters do what I cannot? I no longer want to dishonor my father or other fathers either by damnation or by faint praise. The place of honor is created not out of a denial of the father's or Father's "sins," real or imagined. No, it is created in the spirit of a realization that we probably all try to do our best with the rules we think we are given by our time and place. It is created in a new realization of who I am and how much I owe to him.... Life itself.

Transforming Curriculum

Earlier I share with my reader something of my sense of crisis as a chasm opens in the text of this essay. I am reminded of what has become a rather trite metaphor; that of the Chinese symbol for *crisis* as a signifier of *opportunity*. If the chasm does not appear, or if we are at pains to cover it over or build an invincible bridge across it, change will not and cannot happen. It is perhaps in the chasm that Power begins to break down. So it is with curriculum. It is the chasms and edges we must pay attention to, for they are the moments of possibility and renewal of life. But it is so painful and so fearsome to do so. It is challenging for teachers to *create and invite* the exposure of such edges. It is difficult at another level entirely in the sense that a Real chasm or chasm in the Real has no words. We need Other to help us "see."

I am fond of retelling Jager's (1975) story of the early Greek *theorist*, a young traveller who journies to far-off cities to participate in religious ceremonies and the games. The theorist goes forth as a participant observer, open to learning how things are done in this new place: "Gradually, *theoria* comes to refer to the experience and knowledge one acquires while travelling.... *The qualities of the theorist are no longer that of someone skilled in religious observances but rather someone rich in mundane observations*" (pp. 236-237). Are young men today encouraged to go forth from their places of Cartesian certainty to find *theoria*, the mundane observations of life--would they know how to do so? In the end it is the particularities and facticities of life that are lived or denied. Such particularities are enclosed and demeaned by grand narratives (even a narrative that says there are no longer any grand narratives), and it often seems like we have no room to breathe. But resistance is always possible. That, perhaps, is the hope for mankind and humankind. It will only happen for men if they are prepared to cherish the *little* moments. It has never been quite so difficult for women to do so, for that has been their particular ghetto. Some urban renewal is called for.

We see all too little of the "participant observer" in the curriculum of and about the Modern era. Traditional curriculum is a male-centered curriculum, not only in the sense that it may be written by men, but more importantly in the sense that it centers man's rationalistic way of knowing. Even that may be shifting to a motif of information *control* and access/excess that is congenial to men's ways of being. Information technologies represent the new certainty. And yet a curriculum of certainty is also a curriculum of absence and disembodiment, even on men's own account. We are today obssessed with *information* rather than knowledge. I want to say that "real" knowledge is not "consumed" by "customers" in the post-secondary marketplace. It must be thought, considered, embodied, personalized. Yes, but what is real truth anymore?

Dewey defines education as "that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (cited in Schubert, 1986, p. 320). Reconstruction involves the whole person. The curriculum must invoke the senses and invite what is so often absent in Man's epistemologies. Such a curriculum must even try to take up where language leaves off--in music, in drama and action, in art of all sorts. Ken's story about the little song, *Mockingbird Hill* represents remarkable possibilities; not so much in the particular feelings evoked but in the identification of that which can only be expressed in song. "It comes up in my throat and that's it" he says.

Our curricula must be reconceived. To reconceive is to put everything up for grabs. Paulo Freire says that "No pedagogy that is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors" (cited in Schubert, 1986, p. 313). The curriculum, the instructor-student encounter, the program, the institution, the society--all are connected. We cannot, with impunity, say one thing and do another. If students in social work or education are expected to "empower" those they will work with, they must themselves feel empowered. Many students come with a sense of disempowerment in their lives so far. If a teacher cannot impose knowledge, neither can they say no to power--to attempt to do so is to invoke another hegemony of deception and false promise. But a teacher can make that power visible, share it openly, learn with students.

A curriculum *about* empowerment must, then, shift to an empowering curriculum. It must spin out to a consideration of those in authority "walking the talk," a consideration of particular deployments of *power* that make social work either work or further oppress. And then, horror of horrors, it must open the very curricular and instructional processes to the same scrutiny. Men and women, students and instructors, are apt to respond differently to such curriculum agendas. Few will find it a comfortable enterprise. Men very often struggle with the notion of power as privilege, finding it hard to identify with their privilege when they so often feel inadequate in the face of society's expectations for them. It is not surprising that men who feel wounded by life, though they struggle against disclosing much about the wound, often seem at particular pains to deny their power as menif not to deploy it over others/Others. Surprisingly, though, as my conversations with men show, many men can talk about their pain when they are invited to do so.

Social work has throughout its history as a profession, even in a time when men occupy so many of its influential positions, paid scant attention to men, their experiences and needs..

In social work, if not in other human service professions, there must be another "putting up for grabs." The time-honored male traditions of boundary and contract are now ascendant and even enshrined in legal structures and professional canons. Boundary and connection represent one of intimacy's most troublesome dialectics. To be intimate in the modern conception is to be close but not *too* close, to be empathetic but not sympathetic, to be one's own "self" in the sense that we neither try to overcome nor be overcome by the Other Self (that is what the whole "neediness" discourse is about). The professional helper must, on this account, maintain clear interpersonal boundaries and must clearly contract with their client for the limits of the "work" to be done. Contract is important in another related way in that virtually all new social "work" is now contingent, temporary contract work. These notions are congenial to the dominant ways of being. Does a curriculum of "professional" contract work address the infinitude of human connection, or are we only interested in the quick fix? Perhaps it is time to revisit the whole ethical question of the helping relationship and the pedagogical one within a framework of *intimacy*.

The aim in a transformative curriculum about gender, whether in social work or another area of endeavor, cannot simply be to create a feminized space as a counterweight to the masculine. Some of us have already been there and found the strategy unhelpful. The aim is not to shut/shout men down, but to offer spaces for them to open up. Such a space demands a particular responsibility and response-ability of men, but not only of men. This is a particular challenge, even for a male instructor, in a traditionally women's profession. How does one "talk man" in such a space without implicitly reinstating male hegemony, whether on behalf of male students or of male instructors, or "bashing" men? I might express the dilemma to my students in terms of feeling that I "lose my voice" on matters of men and violence; inviting them to work with me toward a new praxis.

Some men may have to be mentored and initiated into such a foreign venture. Some may welcome the invitation. Some men may refuse it, wondering what this has to do with "helping people." Silence and silencing are apt to be particular issues in curriculum that aims for critical transformation. The "strong silent type" is likely trembling in his boots at the prospect of an embodied curriculum. Sometimes "he" can say so, and the real dialogue begins. Sometimes he whines, blames, argues; the dialogue grinds to a halt in the face/facelessness of male hegemony in action. Sometimes he stops the proceedings entirely with a charge of "male-bashing."

Jocelyn, (after viewing *The Burning Times* in class) writes me a little note to say: "So what else do you have in mind that will upset everything I've believed for all of my life?" Freedom, one of the great Western values, is an illusory thing. It can be, perhaps, about space and the absence of restraints on movement and choice. There is another kind of freedom that is seldom talked about in our time, and that is the freedom to think our lives. Such freedom also carries responsibilities for both student and teacher. Students are not always sure they want more "freedom" if such freedom is apt to further complicate their lives. If transformative curriculum is about helping students to find a "critical praxis" (Schubert, 1986, p. 177) for themselves, the "critical" part is a hard sell in a time so enframed by technical-rational "thinking." If one of the goals of a transformative curriculum is to unsettle the hegemonic, everything must, in a sense, be problematized and made visible. Power, in particular, must always be an open question. It seems inevitable that men and manhood will be unsettled. Such an enterprise, no matter how it is, always engenders a disruption and "chasm" (and not only for the men).

Our contemporary "technological" era (every era is technological in a different way) discourages the messiness of too much thinking or processing of interactions and dynamics. Problematizing life is not a valued part of such a way of "thinking." It is a time of barely concealed terror about what the future holds, a time of "getting on with it" but not knowing what "it" is, a time of "quality time" but no time, a time of learning how to swing the 20oz. hammer so as to compete in the mythical marketplace. It is a time of deep ambivalence about authority, especially the authority that says we must take new look at power and authority; even the authority that says we must revalue thinking and challenge the authority of the status quo. As jagodzinski shows, the authority now says, "I command you to buy and enjoy."

Writing is a time-honored learning teaching/learning mode. In an attempt to help students dethrone received knowledge and to find their own voices, I advocate a particular form of personal essay writing for class assignments, including research assignments. The essay is a reflexive one that incorporates history and ideologies, different current views of the issue, personal reflection and reflection on "real life" examples, places for social work and social change. Students struggle with it, and I am often astonished by the strength of received learnings about writing and knowledge that are challenged by such an assignment. Such an essay form does easily bring us to any promised land together, however. The most glaring critique, perhaps, is that the instructor is still prescribing the terms on which the writing/learning will take place. It can also be said that the essay encourages a certain selectivity and self-referencing of information and in argument. To that I would say that essaying only acknowledges that which we always do anyway.

Critical narratives and autobiographies are also potent learning tools. I use both in several different ways depending on the course I am teaching. The critical narrative (I call it the *Voices Project*) is intended to give a structure of story-telling, story-hearing, and a gentle hermeneutics to students in the human services. I want to say it is subversive in the sense that it tries to remove the excesses of professional power from the conversation with people who have perhaps never felt they had a voice. In "returning" peoples' stories to them and in publishing their stories if they feel ready for that, the project tries to subvert the dominant view that so often silences difference. The critical autobiography has similar aims in terms of the student's personal story, but with an additional expectation that it lead them closer to a critical praxis of self-in-culture.

I have perhaps said little enough about men in popular culture, popular culture in men. It would be simplistic, though easy enough, to portray the "media" as the demon. But the relation between man and "his" cultural artifacts and processes is a complex one indeed. Focussing on all forms of popular culture can be a powerful learning for students who may not have been encouraged to think critically of the genders they have been "consuming and performing."

I reflect mainly on adult education in this section, and that is the focus of this dissertation. But the transformation must extend to our children, in fact it must start at the earliest possible age. What is it, then, that we need to transform? What do we want to teach our boys, and girls? Gurian's project is to create a "curriculum" for boys that lets boys be boys; that is, what boys are hardwired to be. Who could argue with respecting boys for what and who they are? His is not, after all, a misogynist or a hard-edged essentialism. But it is a separatist one, beginning with "creating the tribe boys need." We have seen some of the more hegemonic implications of gender separatism. If his project does not offer the answer, should we then outlaw the "tribal," the active, the instrumental, the competitive--all of the things which have come to be associated with boys? Am I asking the right question here--what do we say about raising girls, and can we speak of one without the other? We must resist fetishizing gender positions and notions of role modelling, however enlightened and even necessary they may seem. Boys and girls deserve spaces and freedom to co-create perform identities with adults and with each other, "on the go." Perhaps we can only hope to help them "tame the excesses" of the traditions they so readily imitate.

Rehabilitation Programs

The White frontiersman as anarchist can be a scary man indeed on today's scene. Can he be rehabilitated as an emotionally embodied pioneer, a new kind of gender adventurer who will explore the risky frontiers, the edges, the new nodal points for performance of gendered life? Can the frontiersman now acknowledge that he needs, not an Eve or helpmate or object on which to vent his bottomless anger--but rather many equal but "different" partners along the trail? Can he acknowledge that there will literally be no trails left if he does not undertake this pioneering work? Can he be persuaded to abandon the fruitless but nonetheless powerful trail of nostalgia and the search for the Holy Grail of Real manhood?

Could whining ever be rehabilitated to allow men to take responsibility for their lives and the consequences of their actions; to take responsibility for their own feelings including *pain* and *anger*? Men do not need, on this view, to learn to "manage" (suppress, redirect, or sublimate) feelings such as anger. Rather, they need to learn (in a space that can guarantee the safety of their Others) what anger teaches them about themselves and about the complexities of the other feelings it so often masks.

Is the man the father of the child, or is the child also the father of the man? Keith's stories show us that men can re-collect manhood. Without question, we must also work harder to find ways to get fathers connected/reconnected with their sons and daughters, not only in an individual sense but in systemic ones.. But in all of that, we might keep Sedgwick's pithy point in mind: maybe manhood has "nothing to do with men." There are dangers in continuing to fetishize the spectacle of male bonding, Manhood and Fatherhood that are so much a part of the hegemonic project. I fear that I am guilty of the same.

Whitmer defines the dominant ideology in our time as the *violence mythos*. A just manhood would be a manhood able and willing to separate from that mythos, from the language of domination and separation. A just manhood is prepared to be accountable to women, to children, to the world. A just manhood sees a new justice that transcends an adversarial "justice" system. It is astonishing that an expression like "more bang for the buck" is still so frequently deployed by so many men and even a few women. The connection between man's view of sexuality and of aggression is captured ever so clearly in this metaphor. It is astonishing, too, how many people see inclusive forms of language as mere "political correctness." Our society needs new languages of connection, respect, equality in difference. Michael White shows us that we must first invite people to tell their stories of oppression and "restraint."

Teresa de Lauretius advocates that we think of gender and sex as "not a property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings, but the 'set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations,' in Foucault's words, by the deployment of a 'complex political technology'" (cited in Champagne, 1996, p. 54). Champagne goes on to suggest that we turn our attention from technologies of power and domination to "technologies of self," resistances, possibilities. It is important not to read Foucault as talking about "free" subjects here. Rather, in ways that he does not address concretely, he seems to refer to the freeing of subjugated or disqualified *knowledges* in local spaces, subcultural spaces, discursive spaces. He brings me back to my original thesis, that is, the proposition that languages of intimacy and vulnerability are *subjugated* in dominant ideologies of manhood. It is an idea still worth pursuing.

By now, the project of brittle heterosexuality (read: masculinity) has been thoroughly problematized. We do not seem ready to give up on heterosexuality, nor should we. In a brave new world, any identity that is not hegemonic or that erases Other identities should be possible. Difference can be celebrated. Somehow, though, man must find ways to change and to understand his changes that do not leave him feeling disempowered, "de-selfed," even "desexed." We still need reference points, even when such are illusory, even manufactured. Man will have to construct/reconstruct his-self "locally," deploying his learnings about self in ways that challenge hegemony at a very personal level. He will have to rehabilitate and redefine *authenticity* in the process, as a process and personal experience that feels "right" rather than as a historical artifact.

Emotions, the subject of men's deepest fears, deserve a rehabilitation. Lutz quite rightly points to the politics of emotion in terms of subjugating women (the "too emotional" ones). It would be useful now for men to look more closely at how they are subjugated; not by emotional women as they often claim, but by hegemonic ideologies that cast emotion as inner, as Other/feminine, as treacherous and dangerous. Can men release the hold of such ideologies to treat emotions as friend and advisor, as the "stuff" of intimate co-creation? Can men find ways to still "speak man" (whatever he might want that to mean) and yet say *no* to hegemony?

Rowboats, Bicycles, and 20 oz. Hammers

How do we now make sense of the rowboat, the bicycle ride, the jobsite? Weingarten convinces me to look more closely at the goodness of men's traditional ways and places, and their possibilities for both "intimate and non-intimate interactions." If we see a man in a rowboat or any other place, we might think about joining him. I will still want us to share something of ourselves beyond 20 oz. hammers. I will still want the silences to be an invocation of life's sacredness and not of its subjugations and hegemonies. I will still want us to dare to show something of our pains and joys. It is a risk-filled possibility.

I think yet again of Ortiz' poem about "tiny alive mice." The father is a *husband* in the best sense of Sam Keen's invocation: "To husband is to practice the art of stewardship, to oversee, to make judicious use of things, and to conserve for the future.... A man who has made a decision to be in place, to make commitments, to forge bonds, to translate the feeling of empathy and compassion into caring (Keen, 1991, p.180). But when the caring husbandry becomes management of resources (however judicious), intimacy is blocked. When the world becomes resource available for use and management rather than site of co-creation, intimacy is illusory. When there is no more "man's work" to be done, intimacy confronts Cartesian man with absence.

Who does gender work and intimacy work? Women have long served as currency and signs to preserve the "line" between men, often under the guise of preserving the "fragile male ego." Women are indeed intimacy brokers, and as Ron says, they are very good at "ordering and administering relationships;" they do so in particular ways that allow men to be (with) men. Men have long expected that women will do their intimacy work for them. My own mother spends much of her life interpreting my father to us and from us. My conversants speak clearly to a similar reality in their own lives. That the image boys/men gain of the father from mother as "stand-in" is not always a positive one is no longer the real point. Nature abhors a vacuum. When he is "absent," she builds the bridge. Could men learn to honor the bridge, cross it with Her help, learn what she has learned through the ages?

I hear John Gray's voice from the television in another part of the house and feel compelled to see what he has to say. He is appearing on the Oprah Winfrey show each week to talk about his particular authoritative "spin" on the technologies of intimacy. Who authorizes such male experts to "deploy" the technologies of intimacy in such a non-intimate way? Who of his attentive audience dares to or even thinks to ask the troublesome questions of Being that recede in such an enframing? Man continues to insist that new technologies will erase the harmful effects of the preceding ones.

"Robert Scholes suggests, 'the whole naive epistemology' that 'a complete self confronts a solid world, perceiving it directly and accurately, always capable of capturing it perfectly' is now 'lying in ruins around us' (cited in Haefner, 1992, p. 132). Scholes captures accurately the contemporary dilemma of being, and of essaying that being. Where do we, in this time, locate a Self and a sense of self? The Cartesian project is in ruins. We replace it with the illusory certainties of technological domination, recycled identities, pastiche. But I reveal my pessimism and my age. There are also exciting possibilities for renegotiating and reconstructing a "postmodern" self if we can find ways to live on the edges and "go with the flow." It will be a contingent self, performed live each day without a net. Its authenticities will be intentional and personal, chosen and lived with care for self and other.

John Stoltenberg (1993) says "This book rejects the widespread notion that [traditional] 'manhood' can be somehow revised and redeemed.... That project is utterly futile, and we all have to give it up" (p. xiv). Man must liberate himself from reconstruction projects that simply reproduce disconnection from Self and Other, and thus reinscribe *injustice*. Michael White, too, argues for the imperative of a "just" manhood, a Foucauldian reconstitution that accepts the Self as "*multi-sited, contradictory, and dilemmatic.*" It is a Self of a postmodern time; not one immobilized by "saturation," "manufactured authenticity," uncertainty, alienation from the culture (though it cannot deny these things); but rather a Self determined to do right by himself and others. This Self is a critical subject , a responsible and response-able Self open at last to intimacy with others and with the earth "he" inhabits. A pipe dream? I do not think so. Men have a deep yearning for such just connection. They simply need to "see" and create openings for it.

How can *intimacy* be rehabilitated in our troubled and uncertain time? I mention already Weingarten's rowboat as a metaphorical site of transformation. She does not advocate leaving men alone in their rowboats; but rather considering the rowboat as site where the illusion of the knowable Self can be dislodged to make way for "co-creation" of new discourses of intimacy. The "itness" of a technological approach to intimacy must be decentered in favor of process. Intimacy, like everything else in our time, becomes contingent, open-ended. Gergen's "saturated self" offers either a terrifying or an exciting opening depending upon one's point of view.

Plummer's "intimate citizenship" offers openings for diverse new identity stories. Perhaps we could foresee a more generative balance between Bruner's "paradigmatic" and "narrative" ways of knowing.

Perhaps above all, a new intimacy finds the courage to live with lack, what we are not. Intimacy's constructions are always less than we want--they keep us from having to face the terrifying "echoless silence of the universe." Perhaps Barthes is onto something when he says that the future belongs to the subject "in whom there is something feminine." Intimacy is about the feminine; not only in the simplistic sense that women are essentially better at "it" or socialized to be so, but in some more radical sense. Man struggles all of his life with the loss of the Mother, the expulsion of the mother from his being.

The essay, too, needs a rehabilitation program. It can be an intimate genre indeed. I fear that my essay can never be as intimate with its readers as Montaigne's. And then I remind myself of the obvious: that we live in different times, that he disclaims that he is writing autobiography, that the line between solipsism and a greater truth is often a fine one indeed. My essay is only a beginning, I hope, of what could be a useful new/old way to "do" human science.

Snail Tracks

The examination is finished and I feel like I am on parole from the binary prison. How do I know the essay is finished? I feel like I can now live happily enough in intimacy with my "symptom," having sublimated it into a thesis. The flow of words stops, for now. I bask in celebration and affirmation from my intimates. The biggest struggle, a nine year struggle, is to let go of what I am not. It is also a central struggle of intimacy.

The time is here, my reader, to ask you to come to some conclusions about this project. I am almost afraid to put the question, for this is the end of a long and laborious journey and I do not want it to be considered vain/in vain, merely solipsistic, the self-indulgent project of an older man of privilege. I fear I say too much of family matters that may dishonor others or the memory of others--or perhaps that I take the high road of not revealing even more of the very painful matters that I theorize so glibly about.

I also have apprehensions about the theoretical project. Do I fully cover the territory and mark its boundaries? Should I review one more article, incorporate one more strand in an analysis that is already voluminous? Do I offend women; will they find themselves absent and paint me with the hegemonic brush? Do I offend gay men, men of color.... Do I manage, even in a small way, to escape the binary prison, the shackles of Modernity?

The grizzled old-timer says a little wistfully, "If I had known then what I know now..." If I had known then what I know now, this project would be a less arduous read. But we can never know then, in the middle of life.

It is your time, my reader, to apply the tests of essayistic truth to the project. I appeal to the community of "plain men" and plain women to judge the worth of this essay about men and intimacy. I hope it is clear that I leave on a note of hopefulness for the project and for the continuity of life.

THESES

- To study men and manhood in the Euro-American tradition is at once to study collective hegemony and privilege, and solitary experiences of subverted power and connection.

- Cartesian manhood is constructed on the dilemmatic and illusory ground of binary opposition, hierarchy, certainty, and the mind-body split.

- Manhood's brittle maintenance of the "always-already-crossed line" of the homosocial bond, and its self-definition as the "not" feminine, represent one of its greatest denials and deprivations.

- Manhood's greatest achievement and greatest Achilles' Heel is its construction of the Cartesian Self: unitary, sovereign, knowing and knowable, and separate.

- Oculocentric Man has been remarkably silent on emotions and other matters of the body. He is slowly learning to expose and rehabilitate his emotional life, but also to interrogate "emotion."

- Manhood has long been a masquerade, maintaining its center/centering by remarkable gender gymnastics that create Otherness, ascribe its own lack and fear to the Other, and yet appropriate that which it finds useful.

- Intimacy represents, on all of these accounts, a problematic and dialectical discourse and way of being for men embedded in modernity.

- Intimacy represents a peculiarly Western construction that is at pains to deny the "echoless silence of the universe" by filling the gap with things and projects, and with the illusion of free and separate selves. Treating intimacy as a unitary phenomenon or as a technology of relation obscures its generative possibilities.

- Discourse delimits being, but there are always spills and resistances. Emerging discourses promise openings for new stories, new identities and new celebrations of difference.

- Hegemonic manhood finds it difficult to theorize and reflect upon itself. In co-creation with Woman/women and other manhoods, which they have long denigrated and denied, many men are inventing new identity spaces and ways of being in connection.

- The essentialist and authenticity projects that assume an essential nexus between sex and gender and a "real" manhood are giving way to a new reflexivity and to notions of identity as diverse performances. It is too early to predict the end of gender.

- Many men are coming to new responsibility, and new response-ability.

- To accede to essence is to deny intimacy's co-creation. To refuse essence is to deny life.

- The essay project can deconstruct itself only in moments. We can only write ourselves out of our time in fragments--*ouch*.

- All theses are suspect in our time.

EPILOGUE

My dad dies this afternoon. I am building a little house out of alder to bring to the funeral. It feels good to work with my hands as I think about him and the good and bad times we have had. I burn "Take Pride in Your Work" into the soft white wood. The last touch is a little finial at the peak of the roof-- I remember his immense pleasure with himself as he puts a hand-cut finial at the peak of each addition to our house on the farm, and then many moments of my own pleasure at the completion of a creative project. What do I owe to my carpenter father? It has not, as people might think, much to do with his teaching of skills, or even with any words (he said he could never tell me anything anyway). It is more, I think, about the unstated: "You can create whatever you choose. Be an artist. Be an iconoclast. Push the boundaries."

I can never know now what he would say to my spin on things, but in this moment I know with certainty that I am right and that I owe him so much more than I have ever been able to acknowledge. I am startled out of my reverie by the realization that I have managed to put the chimney on just a little out of plumb. I decide it is meant to be, and leave it so. I spend the day in a sad and yet also strangely agitated state, reflecting on the two men who mean so much to me, the two men who define beginnings and endings for me: my father, my son. It is time to really say goodbye to one as I wait to reunite with the other.

> My friend, this body offers to carry us for nothing--
> This body offers to carry us for nothing--as
> the ocean carries logs. So on some days the body wails
> with its great energy; it smashes up the boulders, lifting
> small crabs that flow around the sides.
>
> Someone knocks on the door.
> Someone knocks on the door. We do not have time to
> dress. He wants us to go with him through the blowing
> rainy streets, to the dark house.
> We will go there, the body says, and there find the
> father whom we have never met, who wandered out in a

> snowstorm the night we were born, and who then lost his
> memory, and has lived since longing for his child. Whom
> he saw only once... while he worked as a shoemaker, as
> a cattle herder in Australia, as a restaurant cook who
> painted at night.
>
> *When you light the lamp you will see him. He sits*
> *there, behind the door... the eyebrows so heavy, the fore-*
> *head so light... lonely in his whole body, waiting for you.*
> (Robert Bly, *Finding the Father,* in Moyers & Bly, 1990, p. 9)

I find my father *waiting for me*. For the moment I feel as if I am all alone with him. Before I can say goodbye I must acknowledge the gifts we have given to each other. I have *waited* for him, waited for *him*, waited for *words*. In always waiting for more, I deny his gifts to me. In declining to enter his world, I deny him the gifts only I could offer to him. It is a simple little gift of unconditional love and affirmation that we *both* wait for. A friend has given me a cherished little stone, burnished by eons of exposure to the sea. Strangely, it lends me strength. I will myself to listen to my heart, not to back off or do the "proper" thing. I whisper what I have to say:

> *I have been so hard on you, and on men, on my son, and on myself. I could not see your feelings and your need amidst my own. Now I can see how much you cared, and I hope you knew I cared. I hope you knew how much you have given me. I will always take pride in my work. I... love... you.*

> He never phrased
> what he desired,
> and I am
> his son.
> (Bly, excerpt from *My Father at 85*, in Moyers & Bly, 1990, p. 11)

I feel a powerful need to say something at his funeral; to honor what I imagine to be his desires and dreams. No, I do not imagine them, for I feel them and after all I am of him. "He never phrased what he desired," but I know he wanted to be an artist. I am unable to find a harmonica player, so I play a couple of his favorite tunes on my violin--with the most modest of skill.

I struggle as a son. I struggle as a father. What my father seemed to consider his boundary or had to accept as his boundary I can and must push outward. It is a testing of the limits, yes. But it is something more powerful. Despite our issues, I have always felt free to do so. I have the privilege of doing things he could not dream of doing. And my son and daughter are very busy pushing the boundaries out... farther, farther. "The ambiguity of the circumference," Ron's legend goes. It is not the pushing of defined boundaries that defines manhood, but challenging the ambiguity.

Lonely body, lonely bodies, waiting, waiting behind doors, waiting for a bridge that they might cross the chasm that is fathers and sons. Mothers try, but they cannot do it alone. Must it be forever so? No. It must not be, and it can begin with me.

Friends give me money for a little tree. I choose a little tamarack, an unruly and iconoclastic thing--but hardy and beautiful, especially in the fall. Each spring it will recreate those delicate needles as it reaches outward and upward. It will be a perfect reminder of Edwin, the whistling carpenter. And a reminder to me of many other issues and people in my life.... like *mother*.

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